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MEMOIRS

OF THE

LIFE AND ADMINISTRATION

OF

SIR ROBERT WALPOLE,

EARL OF ORFORD.

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BY

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MEMOIRS

OF

SIR ROBERT WALPOLE.

PERIOD THE SEVENTH:

From the Death of Queen CAROLINE, *to the Resignation of Sir* ROBERT WALPOLE;

1737—1742.

CHAPTER 50.

1737—1738.

Historical Deduction of the commercial Treaties between Spain and England, relating to America—Spanish Claims of Search and Depredations—Meeting of Parliament—Debate on the Reduction of the Army—Resolution prohibiting the Publication of Debates.

HITHERTO the minister had maintained the grand system of policy, which he had laid down as necessary for the support of the protestant succession, and for the maintenance of internal tranquillity, which he justly viewed as paramount to all other considerations; and it may be confidently asserted, without the imputation of partiality, that to his firmness and

address, Great Britain was *solely* indebted for a longer period of peace, than had been experienced since the revolution. The advantages which resulted from this system were incalculable. But the nation was sated with so great a blessing. The time arrived, when the violence of party, the clamours of merchants, the dreams of heroic grandeur, and the horror of national degradation, overcame the repugnance of the minister, and plunged England into war.

In consequence of having first discovered the new world, and by virtue of an investiture from Pope Alexander the Sixth, to Ferdinand the Catholic, Spain assumed an exclusive right to all the continent of America. The other nations of Europe, did not acquiesce in this chimerical claim; and Portugal, in particular, made a settlement in the Brasils, which the Spaniards could not prevent. But when Philip the Second acquired possession of Portugal, Brazil fell under his dominion. Having thus obtained the only colony in America which had at that time been occupied by another power, he maintained with greater weight his exclusive right; and so formidable was his naval force, that all attempts made by the English, in the reign of Elizabeth, to settle and trade in South America, were rendered ineffectual. When the naval power of Spain declined, by the defeat of the Armada, and when the vast fabric of her empire began to moulder away under the feeble successors of Philip the Second, the Dutch, French, and English, formed settlements on the

continent and islands of America. But long after the English had made permanent establishments in America, Spain did not renounce her original title, and even in times of peace, hostilities seldom ceased in the West Indies.*

At length in 1667, a treaty was concluded between England and Spain, which, though loosely worded, was a tacit acknowledgment of the British possessions in America.

This treaty, the eighth article alone excepted, related solely to Europe; but was afterwards wrested by the partisans of the Spanish war, as relating no less to America. It allowed freedom of navigation and trade, in all places where commerce was before carried on, and is principally remarkable for permitting the liberty of searching merchant ships, sailing near the ports, and in the seas, belonging to the respective countries, and of confiscating contraband goods, which expression alluded to arms or ammunition, and was principally intended to prevent the English ships from supplying the states of Barbary with military stores. But as the treaty was confirmed and referred to by all subsequent contracts, it gave occasion to the searching of ships, by the Spanish guarda costas in the American seas; an article which afterwards occa-

* For this inquiry I have principally consulted two able and perspicuous papers, drawn up by Horace Walpole. (1.) "Deduction on the depredations between Great Britain and Spain, the Causes of them, and Hints for Remedies." (2.) "Considerations relating to the Navigation and Commerce of Great Britain in America, with respect to the Treaties with Spain, and the Depredations of the Guarda Costas." Walpole Papers.

sioned the violent disputes that finally terminated in the Spanish war. This compact was introductory to a more explicit treaty in 1670, which seems to have been the first by which Spain formally acknowledged the right of any other nation to part of the new world.

The treaty of 1670 solely relates to America; and besides confirming to the English, the sovereign dominion of all lands in the West Indies, then possessed by them, regulates, in the most specific terms, the mode of intercourse. The 9th article forbids the respective subjects of each nation from sailing or trading with the colonies or dominions of the other, in the West Indies; yet permits such navigation and commerce to be exercised according to a licence, granted by either sovereign.

The letter and spirit of this treaty were at direct variance with each other: the letter prohibited, and the spirit encouraged a mutual trade between the two nations. For although the express terms excluded all commerce with the Spanish ports in the West Indies; yet a great facility was given to the mutual intercourse, by the formal permission, that English ships should be allowed to put into Spanish harbours, if forced by storms, or other inconveniences, and continue there, until they had refreshed themselves, and refitted, without giving notice to the governor, unless they were three or four together. Notwithstanding also the right and pre-eminence which the Spaniards claimed to the American seas, care was to be taken, that the liberty

of navigation should not be disturbed. These stipulations incontestably prove that the Spaniards were inclined to favour the English, by conniving at, though they did not permit the trade: and such were the effects of this memorable treaty.

In virtue of those treaties, the Spaniards claimed a right, which they continually exercised, of searching the British merchant ships, which passed near their American ports.

From the conclusion of the treaty of 1670, to the death of Charles the Second, king of Spain, a strict friendship and union subsisted between the two crowns, both in Europe and America; and a flourishing, although illicit trade, was, by connivance and indulgence, carried on between the English and Spanish plantations. The reason for this favourable treatment is evident. The great opposition and rivalry which then subsisted between France and Spain, and the desire of France to become mistress of the Low Countries, inclined Spain to consider the English as her most useful friends, and the most capable of protecting or incommoding, by their maritime force, her foreign dominions. It was no wonder, therefore, that the Spaniards not only strictly observed their treaties, but even extended their indulgence, with respect to trade, farther than could be claimed by specific stipulations.

It was easy to foresee that the accession of a prince of the house of Bourbon to the throne, would affect the British trade to Spanish America. The consequences of this event would

have been immediately visible, had not the war of the succession, in which Spain became the theatre of bloody hostilities, rivetted the attention of Philip the Fifth to his European dominions. But he was no sooner firmly established, than he turned his views to the American trade. The treaty of commerce which was concluded at the peace of Utrecht, between Great Britain and Spain, introduced a material alteration in the intercourse between the two nations. The 9th article in the treaty of 1670, which granted permission of trade to the ports and places in the West Indies, with the licence of the sovereign, was annulled; a contract, commonly called the Asiento treaty, for supplying the Spanish colonies with a certain number of negroes, was granted to the South Sea company, for thirty years, with the privilege of annually sending a single ship, of a certain burthen, to Spanish America, laden with European merchandise. Excepting these alterations, the treaties of 1667 and 1670 were confirmed, and although those treaties were broken during the two short wars which took place between Spain and England in 1718 and 1727; yet as they were renewed by the quadruple alliance, and the treaty of Seville, the trade to America was nominally placed, in all other respects, upon the same footing as it stood under Charles the Second, king of Spain.

Soon, however, new principles were adopted in the Spanish councils, exactly the reverse of their former proceedings. The letter of the American treaty was now followed, and the

spirit by which it was dictated, abandoned. Although the English retained the liberty of putting into the Spanish harbours, for the purpose of refitting and provisioning, yet they were far from enjoying the same advantages of carrying on a friendly and commercial intercourse. They were watched with scrupulous jealousy, strictly visited by guarda costas, and effectual means adopted to prevent any commerce with the colonies, except what was allowed to the annual ship. The cause of this alteration was evident. Spain was governed by a sovereign connected with France by blood and policy; deprived of the Netherlands, she no longer considered England as her natural ally; and was not interested to obtain her friendship by commercial sacrifices. The influence of these considerations was occasionally suspended, during the temporary misunderstandings between Spain and France. At those periods, a more friendly intercourse was permitted, and this variation in the policy of Spain gave rise to a variety of misconstructions.

From the long continuance of this trade, the British merchants began to consider it as a prescriptive right, not an indulgence, and were unwilling to renounce so profitable a branch of commerce, which many of them pursued in an open and daring manner. Their vessels continually put into the Spanish harbours, under pretence of refitting and refreshing; and in many places almost publicly disposed of European merchandise, in exchange for gold and

silver. Others sailing near their ports and harbours, were repaired to by smugglers, or sent their long boats towards the shore, and dealt with the natives.

The Spaniards complained that the Asiento* annual ship, was followed by several other vessels which moored at a distance, and continually supplied it with fresh goods, that the fair of Panama, once the richest of the world, where the Spanish merchants were accustomed to exchange gold and silver for European merchandise, had considerably fallen, and that the English monopolised the commerce of America.

It was no wonder, therefore, that the guarda costas, and other armed vessels, used vigorous exertions to prevent this illicit traffic, that some illegal captures were made, and occasional acts of violence and cruelty committed. The distance from Europe, the insolence of the English sailors, the delays of the Spanish tribunals, and the interest of the governors in declaring the vessels confiscated, because they had a share in the forfeiture, rendered frequent redress of grievances extremely difficult, if not impracticable. The merchants who suffered, made violent clamours, over-rated their losses, and exaggerated the accounts of insult and barbarity committed by the Spaniards.

Volumes and volumes have been written by the two people on the subject of these depredations: but as each side endeavoured to pervert facts, and gave different constructions to the

* Desormeaux [illegible]

most simple expressions, the dispute could never be finally settled. The state of these differences, and the difficulty of adjusting them, are well explained in a few words by Mr. Keene, in a letter to the duke of Newcastle:

"Upon the whole, the state of our dispute seems to be, that the commanders of our vessels always think, that they are unjustly taken, if they are not taken in *actual* illicit commerce, even though proofs of their having loaded in that manner be found on board; and the Spaniards on the other hand presume, that they have a right of seizing, not only the ships that are continually trading in their ports, but likewise of examining and visiting them on the high seas, in order to search for proofs of fraud, which they may have committed; and till a medium be found out between these two notions, the government will always be embarrassed with complaints, and we shall be continually negotiating in this country for redress, without ever being able to procure it."*

While the question of depredations was agitated, other differences arose between England and Spain. The right of cutting logwood in the bay of Campeachy, and of collecting salt in the island of Tortuga, was called in question; and some disputes took place in regard to the limits of Carolina and Georgia. Geraldino, the Spanish agent in London, delivered a strong memorial, claiming part of those colonies which

* Benjamin Keene's dispatch to the duke of Newcastle, Madrid, December 13th, 1737. Walpole Papers.

lay contiguous to Florida; and the demand was made in such violent terms, that the ministers apprehensive of an attack on the province of Georgia; ordered a battalion of troops to embark from Gibraltar for America. *

Though Elizabeth Farnese had procured the throne of Naples and Sicily for Don Carlos, she was dissatisfied with the peace. She still aspired to the possession of Parma and Tuscany, which she considered as hereditary possessions; and when on the death of John Gaston, the last sovereign of the house of Medicis, Tuscany devolved on the duke of Loraine, she beheld his succession with an unfavourable eye. She even made overtures to England, and insinuated, that if assistance was effectually granted, Spain should relinquish all claims on Gibraltar and Minorca, and accommodate all commercial differences. But this overture, which tended to plunge Europe into a new war, being rejected, the queen of Spain was still more irritated, and continued to maintain powerful armaments by sea and land. In conformity to orders, sent from the court of Madrid, the guarda costas became more vigilant and severe; and repeated instances of their violence were transmitted to England.

A petition was accordingly presented to the king, by a large body of merchants trading to the West Indies, complaining of these depredations, and stating specific cases of illegal captures and confiscations. The king referred this

* The duke of Newcastle to Horatio Walpole, January 13th, 1737. Walpole Papers.

petition to the cabinet council, before whom the merchants were heard, on the 11th of October 1737. In consequence of their evidence, the duke of Newcastle drew up a spirited memorial, showing the nature of the trade, and giving such an explanation of the treaties of 1667 and 1670, on the due understanding of which the affair ultimately rested, as appeared to justify the complaints of the British traders, and to criminate the conduct of the Spaniards. This memorial, and the merchants' petition, were sent to Mr. Keene in November, with orders to present it to the king of Spain. After repeating the various applications which had been ineffectually made for restitution of ships and effects unjustly seized, and demanding satisfaction for the depredations and cruelties committed by the guarda costas, it required the king of Spain to give effectual orders for punishing the persons guilty of these atrocities, and for granting immediate reparation to the British subjects; and concluded by observing, that if, contrary to expectation, these instances should not have the desired effect, the king of England would be obliged to procure for his people, that satisfaction which they had a right to demand, by virtue of subsisting treaties, and the law of nations. Mr. Keene presented this memorial on the 10th of December; to which Philip replied, that he would do all in his power to preserve the friendship of the king of England. Notwithstanding the pressing importunities of Mr. Keene, who

declared that nothing but immediate restitution and exemplary punishment could give satisfaction, the answer was not returned before the meeting of parliament. It also appeared, that the Spanish court did not view the subject in the same light, as had been represented by the English cabinet, and controverted many positions advanced in the memorial.

Such was the state of the disputes between England and Spain, when parliament was assembled, on the 24th of January 1738. The speech from the throne was unusually short. After recommending the dispatch of public business, with prudence and expedition; and ordering the estimates of the current expenditure to be laid before the house, the king trusted that the zeal, affection, and due regard which the commons had shown in supporting his government and the public safety, would induce them to make the necessary provisions for the honour, peace, and security of his crown and kingdom. He then concluded, by exhorting the house to lay aside all heats and animosities, which might unnecessarily obstruct the session. The address, after condoling with the king, on his, and the nation's irreparable loss, by the death of the queen, assured him that they would avoid all heats and animosities, and effectually raise the necessary supplies; and in gratitude for the regard which his majesty had always shown for the liberties and privileges of his subjects, would testify their affection and zeal for the support of

his government, and the preservation of the constitution.* Although little objection could be made, either to the speech or to the address, it did not, however, pass without some petulant remarks from Shippen and Sir William Wyndham.

The determined aim of opposition was, to increase the misunderstanding with Spain, to such a degree, as to render the adjustment of the disputes impracticable, and by inflaming the nation with exaggerated accounts of Spanish cruelties to compel the minister to enter into a war, which they considered as the probable means of obtaining his removal.

The principal views of opposition being directed to involve the nation in hostilities they gave a striking instance of their inconsistency by resisting, with unusual warmth, the motion made February 3, for maintaining 17,400 men, and proposing that the army should be reduced to 12,000. Besides the common topics of declamation, usually urged against a standing army, as obnoxious to the constitution, contrary to the principles on which the revolution was founded, and intended to support the system of corruption and arbitrary power; the debate took a new and unexpected turn. Shippen, with a view to cast an odium on the authors of the revolution, and to prove that the liberties of the people had been better secured before, than since that period, affected to date the rise of a standing army in Britain, from the ninth year of William.

* Journals.

He accused the Whigs who should vote for this question, of having deserted the principles of their ancestors; and made a warm panegyric on the Tories, for their uniform steadiness in adhering to the true principles of the British constitution.

In reply to these observations, the minister undertook to defend the consistency of the Whigs who voted for the question. He made a judicious distinction between an army composed entirely of British subjects, commanded by gentlemen of the best families, depending for its very being on the annual consent of parliament, and one of foreign mercenary troops, composed of the lowest populace, and commanded by men of no family or fortune. After declaring that such an army, so far from endangering the constitution, tended rather to preserve it against faction and disaffection, and contributed to protect the people against domestic rapine and foreign invasion; he stated the reasons for maintaining a body of troops, and particularly dwelt on that which arose from the number of persons disaffected to the government. He artfully endeavoured to confound the Tories with the Jacobites, and to consider all those who opposed government, as inclined to the Pretender, and particularly alluded to Shippen.

"Suppose Sir," he said, "we have at present nothing to fear from any foreign enemy; yet it cannot be said we are in absolute security, or that we have nothing to fear. There is one thing I am afraid of, and it is, indeed, the only

thing, I think, we have at present to fear. The fear I mean, is that of the Pretender. Every one knows there is still a pretender to his majesty's crown and dignity; there is still a person who pretends to be lawful and rightful sovereign of these kingdoms; and what makes the misfortune more considerable, there are still a great number of persons in these kingdoms so much deluded by his abettors, as to think the same way. These are the only persons who can properly be called disaffected, and they are still so numerous, that though this government had not a foreign enemy under the sun, our danger from the Pretender, and the disaffected part of our subjects, is a danger which every true Briton ought to fear, a danger which every man who has a due regard for our present happy establishment, will certainly endeavour to provide against, as much as he can.

"I am sorry to see, Sir, that this is a sort of fear, which many amongst us endeavour to turn into ridicule; and for that purpose they tell us that though many of our subjects are discontented and uneasy, very few are disaffected: I must beg leave to be of a different opinion: for, I believe, most of the discontents and uneasinesses that appear among the people, proceed originally from disaffection. No man of common prudence will profess himself openly a Jacobite. By so doing, he not only may injure his private fortune, but he must render himself less able to serve effectually the cause he has embraced; therefore there are but very few such men in the

kingdom. Your right Jacobite, Sir, disguises his true sentiments. He roars out for revolution principles; he pretends to be a great friend to liberty, and a great admirer of our ancient constitution; and under this pretence, there are numbers who every day endeavour to sow discontents among the people, by persuading them that the constitution is in danger, and that they are unnecessarily loaded with many and heavy taxes. These men know that discontent and disaffection, are, like wit and madness, separated by thin partitions; and therefore they hope, if they can once render the people thoroughly discontented, it will be easy for them to render them disaffected. These are the men whom we have most reason to fear. They are, I am afraid, more numerous than most gentlemen imagine; and I wish I could not say they have been lately joined; and very much assisted by some gentlemen, who, I am convinced, have always been, and still are very sincere and true friends to our present happy establishment.

"By the accession of these new allies, as I may justly call them, the real but concealed Jacobites have succeeded even beyond their own expectation; and therefore I am not at all ashamed to say I am in fear of the Pretender. It is a danger I shall never be ashamed to say I am afraid of; because it is a danger to which we must always be more or less exposed; and, I believe the less number of regular forces we keep up, the more we shall always be exposed to this danger."

Sir John Hynde Cotton replied; "Sir, I do own it gives me a good deal of surprise, to hear gentlemen who act upon revolution principles, talk so utterly inconsistent with what was the language of the Whigs in former times. Sir, I know not what Whigs the honourable gentleman has been acquainted with; but I have had the honour and happiness to be intimate with many gentlemen of that denomination. I have likewise, Sir, read the writings of many authors who have espoused these principles; I have sat in this house during the most material debates that have happened between them and the Tories; and I can declare from my own experience, that I never knew one who acted on true Whig principles, vote for a standing army in time of peace. What the principles of the Whigs in former days were, I can only learn from reading or information. But I have heard of Whigs who were against all unlimited votes of credit; I have heard of Whigs who looked upon open corruption as the greatest curse that could befal any nation; I have heard of Whigs who esteemed the liberty of the press to be the most valuable privilege of a free people, and triennial parliaments, the greatest bulwark of their liberties; and I have heard of a Whig administration who have resented injuries done to the trade of the nation, and have revenged insults offered to the British flag These, Sir, are the principles, if I am rightly informed, that once characterized the true Whigs. Let gentlemen apply these charac-

ters to their present conduct, and then, laying their hands upon their hearts, let them ask themselves if they are Whigs?"*

In reply, the minister again adverted to the danger from the Pretender's party, and insinuated that the arts used by the discontented Whigs to set the people against the government aided that cause. "For the faction," he said, "which is in the interest of the person who disputes his majesty's title to the crown, always presumes, that whoever is against the administration, is against the establishment likewise; and nothing has more contributed to keep up the spirit of that party, than their industriously propagating that doctrine. This is the true reason that they look upon the lenity of that government as the effect of its weakness, and attribute the indulgence they meet with to our fears. This is the true reason why they endeavour to improve to their advantage every accident that happens to the nation, though, perhaps, it is very distant from their purpose, and fell out contrary to their hopes. This is the reason why, on the late melancholy event† that afflicted the nation, their hopes revived, their cabals were set on foot, and every tool of their party was employed in their consultations, to know how to accomplish their favourite point. There are many in our galleries now who know what I have said to be true, and if they had the privilege of speaking here, could, if they pleased, convince us how improper

* Chandler. † Alluding to the queen's death.

the proposed reduction is, while such a spirit subsists in the kingdom.

"I have known a time when gentlemen acted on true Whig principles; and at that time they seemed to be of opinion, that the best, if not the only way to secure us from popery and arbitrary power was, by securing the present establishment of the crown in his majesty's person and family. They were then of opinion, that this was best done by keeping up a regular body of forces; and I should be glad to know if the same reasons do not subsist now, or if they who are the enemies of our present establishment, have been weakened by the opposition of these gentlemen to the administration."*

After a reply from Pulteney, and a few unimportant speeches, the debate appeared to be finally concluded, and as no division took place, the triumph on the side of the minister seemed complete. But the altercation was renewed on a subsequent day by the imprudence and petulance of the violent Whigs, who were irritated at the assertions advanced by the Tories, that the maintenance of a standing army was inconsistent with the true principles of Whiggism.

The report being made by the chairman of the committee of supply, the estimate for the regiment to be sent to Georgia, was objected to. Colonel Mordaunt very injudiciously deviated from the great distinction which the minister had laid down between those who promoted the cause of the Pretender, and those who supported

* Chandler.

the protestant succession, and introduced the more narrow distinction of Whig and Tory. He said, "I have always gloried in being thought a Whig; I hope I shall never by my behaviour, either in this house, or without doors, give the least occasion to the world to think otherwise of me; and for this very reason, I am for keeping up an army, because I *think the keeping up an army absolutely necessary for supporting the Whig interest*, and preserving the peace and quiet of the people. In every dispute that has happened of late years about our army, I have looked upon the question to be chiefly, *whether Whig or Tory should prevail?* And as I have always thought, as I believe every unprejudiced Whig in the kingdom thinks, *that if the army should be disbanded, or very much reduced, the Tory interest would prevail;* therefore, I have generally been against such reductions, and always shall be cautious of agreeing to any such proposition. Nay, I am so firmly attached to the Whig interest, that if I should think four times the number of troops absolutely necessary for supporting that interest, I would be for keeping up a standing army four times as numerous as that we have now on foot."

These injudicious assertions infused a new spirit into the anti-ministerial Whigs. Lord Polwarth, in a sensible and animated speech, justified the Whigs who opposed government, and explained the nature of the old Whig principles. He endeavoured to prove that the question did not turn on distinguishing who were Whigs,

and who were Tories, but simply according to their present behaviour and political conduct. From thence he insinuated, that the ministerial party, who affected to distinguish themselves by the appellation of Whigs, acted in contradiction to the principles of that body, and were in reality Tories; and that those whom they invidiously styled Tories, while they were directed and actuated by this principle, were in reality Whigs. After making these observations, he added, "I am apt to suspect that my honourable friend calls this the Whig interest, and if so, I shall readily agree with him, that what he calls the Whig interest, being what I call the Tory interest, cannot be supported without a standing army. This may be a prevailing argument with him for being against any reduction; but it is an argument that has quite a different influence with me; for I think no interest, nor any party of men, ought to be supported, if a standing army becomes necessary for their support."* Neither the minister, nor any of his adherents, took any share in these frivolous altercations, which only tended to the unnecessary prolongation of the debate. After speeches from Lyttleton, Sir Thomas Saunderson, and Pitt, the motion for reducing the army was negatived by 249 against 164.

I have thought it necessary to enlarge on this debate, and to particularize the part taken by the minister, as well because it proves that the address which Walpole had employed to render

* Chandler.

the Tories odious, by confounding them with the Jacobites, had not been unsuccessful, as because the substance of the speech has been shamefully misrepresented by some modern writers, who have indirectly attributed to Walpole, expressions used by others which he never employed, and have totally mistaken the spirit and meaning of his arguments.*

* The accounts of this debate given by Smollett and Belsham, are here subjoined to show that Smollett has misrepresented the debate, and how carelessly Belsham has copied his narrative, and added his own errors.

SMOLLETT.

"*The adherents of the minister fairly owned*, that if the army should be disbanded, or even considerably reduced, the *Tory interest would prevail*: that the present number of forces was absolutely necessary to maintain the peace of the kingdom, which was filled with clamour and discontent, as well *as to support the Whig interest*; and that they would *vote for keeping up four times the number*, should it be found expedient for that purpose. The members in the opposition replied, that this was a severe satire on the ministry, whose conduct had given birth to such a spirit of discontent. They said it was in effect a tacit acknowledgment, that what they called the Whig interest was no more than an inconsiderable party, which had engrossed the administration by indirect methods, which acted contrary to the sense of the nation, and de-

BELSHAM.

The ministry scrupled not to affirm, "That if the army was disbanded, the *Tory interest would quickly predominate*: that the kingdom was filled with clamour and discontent, which a standing military force only could effectually suppress: that the support of the *Whig interest demanded the maintenance of this force*; and it was hoped and presumed the house would *triple the number*, if adjudged necessary for this purpose." The members of the opposition replied, in their accustomed strain of *vain reasoning*, "that this vindication contained in it a sentence of self-condemnation, for to what cause could the spirit of clamour and discontent be ascribed, but to the conduct of the ministry? and it was from their own acknowledgment clear, that what they were pleased to style the Whig interest, was, in fact, an inconsiderable party, which had en-

The Spanish affairs so much occupied the public attention, that all other considerations were totally overlooked. Had not this been the

pended for support upon a military power, by whom the people in general were overawed, and consequently enslaved. They affirmed, that the discontent of which the ministry complained, was in effect owing to that very standing army, which perpetuated their taxes, and hung over their heads as the instruments of arbitrary power and oppression. Lord Polwarth explained the nature of Whig principles, and demonstrated that the party which distinguished itself by this appellation, no longer retained the maxims by which the Whigs were originally characterised. Sir John Hynde Cotton who spoke with the courage and freedom of an old English baron, declared he never knew a member of that house, who acted on true Whig principles, vote for a standing army in time of peace, &c." History of England, vol. 3. p. 5.

Smollett imputes to the *adherents of the minister*, expressions which were only used by *one* individual member, who was not in administration; and Belsham, omitting the words *adherents of*, and putting only *the ministry*, leaves the reader to suppose, that Walpole himself, or some of the ministry, had been so absurd as to declare, *that a standing army was necessary to support the Whig interest, and that if the army was disbanded, the Tory interest would prevail.*

grossed the power of government by indirect and unconstitutional methods, which acted contrary to the sense of the nation, and which depended for support upon that very military force which was the grand source of the national discontent, which perpetuated the national taxes, and which menaced the national liberties with destruction. The claim of the ministry and their adherents in the house to the appellation of Whigs, was warmly disputed; and Sir John Hynde Cotton declared, that a genuine Whig could never vote for a standing army in time of peace, &c." This author has substituted, of his own authority, *frequent parliaments*, for *triennial parliaments*, the expression used both in Chandler and Smollett. Memoirs of the Brunswick Family, vol. 1. p. 372.

case, a resolution made this session, would have attracted public notice, and have incurred the censure of those writers, who affect a high regard for the liberty of the press. I allude to the enforcement of the standing order, prohibiting the publication of the debates, while the house was sitting, and the extension of that prohibition to the recess. The speaker said, he saw with concern, that an account of their proceedings was inserted in the newspapers, and other periodical publications, by which means the speeches were liable to great misrepresentation, and hoped the house would find some method of preventing this abuse. Sir William Yonge, Sir William Wyndham, and Winnington, agreed with the speaker on the propriety of this measure. Pulteney enforced the necessity of putting a stop to the practice so justly complained of. He was of opinion, that no appeals should be made to the public, concerning the proceedings of the house. He urged, that to print speeches, even if they should not be misrepresented, was making the speakers accountable without doors, for what they said within. He then declared, that however anxious to check this scandalous practice, he was unwilling that it should be done in such a manner, as might affect the liberty of the press, or appear as if the house claimed a privilege to which it was not entitled. That although he had no doubt it was in the power of that house to punish printers for publishing an account of their proceedings, even during the recess; yet as that

practice had been long connived at, he did not wish to punish any past offences, and thought it sufficient to pass resolutions which might deter in future. He urged, that such a resolution would not affect any person who should print an account of their proceedings when the parliament should be dissolved, and alluded to the history of the parliament which had been published in 1713, the author of which, he observed, had never been called to account by either house of parliament. He added, that parliaments, when they do amiss, ought to be arraigned with freedom. He hoped this parliament would not deserve it, but if it did, he should be sorry that any resolutions were entered into, which might prevent its being represented in its proper colours. The minister, he trusted, would agree with him in this opinion; and the house he hoped, would never stretch their privileges so far as to cramp the freedom of writing on public affairs. "But this consideration," he concluded, "can never affect the resolution which gentlemen propose to come to now. We have rather been too remiss in not putting a stop to this scandalous practice, that has been long complained of. I always thought that these pamphlets, containing our debates, were circulated by encouragement, and at the expense of government; for, till the honourable gentleman who spoke last save one (Mr. Winnington) mentioned the magazines in the manner he did, I have still been used to look on the publishing them as a ministerial project. I imagined that it being found imprac-

ticable to make the people buy and read the Gazetteer by itself, it was contrived so that the writings of the other party, being printed in the same pamphlet, it might be some invitation to the public to look into the Gazetteer, and I dare say, Sir, the run which the magazines have had, has been entirely owing to this stratagem. The good and bad are printed together, and people are by this means drawn in to read both. But I think it is now high time to put a stop to the effects they may have, by coming to a resolution that may at least prevent any thing being published during the time of our sitting as a house, which may be imposed upon the world as the language and words of gentlemen, who perhaps never spoke them."

The observations of the minister, and his reply to these invectives, which had little reference to the subject, were manly and dignified, and bear all the internal marks of authenticity.

"Sir, you have with great justice punished some persons for forging the names of gentlemen on the backs of letters; but the abuse now complained of is, I conceive, a forgery of a worse kind; for it tends to misrepresent the sense of parliament, and impose upon the understanding of the whole nation. It is but a petty damage that can arise from a forged frank, when compared with the infinite mischiefs that may be derived from this practice. I have read some debates of this house, Sir, in which I have been made to speak the very reverse of what I meant. I have read others, wherein all the wit, learning,

and argument, have been thrown into one side; and on the other nothing but what was low, mean, and ridiculous; and yet when it comes to the question, the division has gone against the side which, upon the face of the debate, had reason and justice to support it. So that, had I been a stranger to the proceedings, and to the nature of the arguments themselves, I must have thought this to have been one of the most contemptible assemblies on the face of the earth. What notion, then, Sir, can the public, who have no other means of being informed of the debates, than what they have from these papers, entertain of the wisdom and abilities of an assembly, who are represented to carry every point against the strongest and the plainest argument and appearances. However, Sir, as I believe gentlemen are by this time sensible of the necessity of putting a stop to this practice, it will be quite unnecessary for me to argue a point wherein we are all agreed. But I cannot help taking notice of one thing mentioned by the honourable gentleman who spoke last, since I was the person to whom he was pleased to appeal. He mentioned that the history of a whole parliament had been printed, and seemed to insinuate that people might make very free with parliaments. Really, Sir, I will be so free as to own, that I do know of such a pamphlet being printed: nay, I believe, I know a little of the author, and the publication. But at the same time, I know, Sir, that was one of the worst houses of commons that ever this nation saw; that they had a design to

introduce the Pretender; that they had approved of a scandalous peace, and after the most glorious war that was ever carried on; and had it not been for some very favourable circumstances, they would have set aside the present happy establishment in his majesty's person and family. I hope, Sir, no gentleman will find fault with any reflection, that could be thrown out against such a house of commons; I hope, likewise, that no gentleman will pretend to draw any parallels betwixt their conduct and our's. But, Sir, besides these considerations, gentlemen are to reflect, that the parliament which was described in that history, had been dissolved before the history itself was published. And not only so, but there is a noble lord * in the other house, who can, if he pleases, inform gentlemen, that the author of that history was so apprehensive of the consequences of printing it, that the press was carried to his house, and the copies printed off there.†

This, I think, Sir, will be sufficient to show, that the author did not think himself out of danger, even though the parliament was dissolved. But I am not for carrying things to such a length at present. It may be sufficient, if we come to a resolution to prevent the publication of any part of our proceedings during the recess, as well as the sitting of the parliament. As to what the honourable gentleman says, with regard to the magazines being published and distributed by order, and at the expense of government, I don't know if he was serious or not. If serious,

* Probably lord Cobham. † See Chap. 7, p. 76.

he must have a very contemptible opinion of the understanding of those gentlemen, who have the honour to serve his majesty, if he imagines that they would be so weak as to propagate papers, every page almost of which had a direct tendency against their own interest. If any gentleman will take the trouble, which, I own, I very seldom do, to look into these magazines, he will find four pages against government for one in its favour; and generally the subject is of such a nature, as would be severely punished, under any other government than our own. If the honourable gentleman was not serious, I think a more proper time might have been chosen for showing his wit, than while we are considering the means of putting a stop to a practice, which he himself, and every gentleman who spoke in this debate, allows so nearly to affect the dignity and privileges of this house. For my own part, Sir, I am extremely indifferent, what opinions some gentlemen may form of the writers in favour of government. But I shall never have the worse opinion of them for that; there is nothing more easy than to raise a laugh; it has been the common practice of all minorities when they were driven out of every other argument. I shall never be afraid to do what I think right, and for the service of his majesty and my country, because I may be laughed at. But really Sir, I will be so free as to say, that if the want of wit, learning, good manners, and truth, is a proper object of contempt and ridicule, the writers in the opposition seem to me to have a

much better title to both, than those for the government. No government, I will venture to say, ever published so few libels, and no government ever had provocation to punish so many. I could name a government in this country, under which those writings, which are now cried up, as founded upon the laws, and in the constitution, would have been punished as libels, even by the gentlemen who are now the warmest advocates for the liberty of the press, and for suffering the authors of those daily libels that appear in print, to pass with impunity. But I ask pardon for what I have said, that may appear foreign to the present consideration; I was led to it by what had been thrown out by the gentleman who spoke before."

It was then unanimously resolved, "It is a high indignity to, and a notorious breach of the privilege of this house; for any news writer in letters or other papers (as minutes, or under any other denomination) or for any printer or publisher, of any printed newspaper of any denomination, to presume to insert in the said letters or papers, or to give therein any account of the debates, or other proceedings of this house, or any committee, as well during the recess, as the sitting of parliament; and that this house will proceed with the utmost severity against such offenders."*

It is remarkable that this resolution passed without a single dissenting voice, and with little public animadversion. It is no less remarkable,

* Chandler.

that not one of our historical writers has taken notice of the debate, which is the reason I have deemed it not improper to give a place in these memoirs, to a transaction of such great historical importance. This resolution was not followed by any beneficial effect. On the contrary, it tended only still farther to excite public curiosity, while it rendered truth more difficult of access. It compelled the compilers of periodical publications to adopt a covert method of giving the debates, which made it more easy to falsify them, and it is a well known fact, that after this period, the accounts became less authentic than before.* The Gentleman's and the London Magazine, were the principal vehicles of the parliamentary debates. The Gentleman's Magazine published the debates in the senate of Lilliput, under the names of Lilliput and Brobdingnag, and the London Magazine gave a journal of the proceedings and debates in a political club, with Roman appellations. Each miscellany afterwards explained these fictitious titles in advertisements affixed to the respective volumes.

* Tindal.

CHAPTER 51.

1738.

Proceedings in Parliament relative to the Spanish Depredations—Petitions—Examination of Witnesses—Case of Jenkins—Clamours of the People—Report of the Committee—Debates thereon—Firm and temperate Conduct of Walpole—Resolutions of both Houses.

THE remainder of the session was principally devoted to the discussion of the Spanish depredations.

On the 3d of March, the minority commenced their attack. A petition prepared with great art and asperity, from divers merchants, planters, and others, trading to and interested in the British plantations in America, was presented to the house by Alderman Perry, recapitulating all that had passed in consequence of former applications, and declaring that the Spaniards still continued their depredations, and carried them to a greater height than ever.

This petition was referred to a committee of the whole house. Alderman Perry, then moved that the petitioners should be heard by themselves *and* counsel. The speaker having objected, as a point of form, that it never was the custom of the house to admit parties to be heard by themselves *and* counsel, proposed an amendment, by themselves *or* counsel. Sir John

Barnard and Sir William Wyndham objecting to this amendment, as no less captious and frivolous, than highly prejudicial to the petitioners; the minister said, "Sir, I must humbly beg leave to differ from both the honourable gentlemen. The judgment which we should form in this case, ought to be grounded on facts as they are fairly represented, not as they are artfully aggravated. Every gentleman, I believe, from his bare reflection on the injuries our merchants have received from Spain, feels within his breast an indignation arise, which there is no occasion to increase by the power of eloquence, or the arts of a lawyer. When gentlemen see an affair through the mist that passion raises before their eyes, it is next to impossible they should form a just judgment. I believe there is scarce any gentleman here, who is not acquainted with as much geography, and as much of the history, both of Britain and Spain, as may enable him, from a plain representation of facts, to judge whether the allegations in this petition be true or false. Now, Sir, are not the merchants themselves the most proper to give us this representation? Are they not most immediately interested in the facts? Where then, is the necessity of counsel? Or what occasion is there to work upon the passions, where the head is to be informed? I believe, Sir, every gentleman will find his heart as much affected by the artless accounts of the sufferers themselves, as by the studied rhetoric of the most eloquent counsel. However, Sir, I shall not take the liberty to

make any motion on this head, but entirely submit it to gentlemen's consideration."

The answer of alderman Willimot to these moderate remarks, will prove the temper by which the party in favour of the war were actuated.

"Sir, I think the petitioners ought to have liberty to be heard, not only by themselves and counsel, but if it were possible that we could indulge them in other advantages, we ought to do it. To talk of working upon the passions!—— Can any man's passions be wound up to a greater height, can any man's indignation be more raised, than every free-born Englishman's must be, when he reads a letter which I received this morning, and which I have now in my hand. This letter gives an account that seventy of our brave sailors are now in chains in Spain. Our countrymen in chains! and slaves to Spaniards! Is not this enough to fire the coldest? Is not this enough to rouse all the vengeance of national resentment? And shall we sit here debating about words and forms, while the sufferings of our countrymen call loudly for redress?" Notwithstanding these intemperate effusions, the house agreed to the amendment proposed by the speaker, that the committee should be instructed to admit the petitioners to be heard, if they thought fit, by themselves *or* counsel.

On the same day, other petitions were presented, and referred to a committee of the whole house, in the same manner as that of the merchants. Sir John Barnard, after inveighing

against these unjust seizures and depredations, and stating the necessity of preventing them in future, moved for an address to the king, "That he would be graciously pleased to give directions for laying before the house, copies or extracts of the several petitions, representations, memorials, and all other papers relating to the Spanish depredations upon the British subjects, which had been presented to his majesty, or delivered to either of his majesty's principal secretaries of state since Midsummer last; together with copies or extracts of such memorials or representations, as had been made either to the king of Spain or his ministers, and the answers returned by them to the same; and together with copies or extracts of the letters written to his majesty's minister at Madrid, with the answers received from him, relating to the said depredations."

This motion brought on a long and warm debate, in which the cruelties and insults of the Spaniards, and the pusillanimity of the British cabinet, were equally exaggerated. The minister, ever anxious to avoid any violent resolution, which might offend the irritable temper of the court of Madrid, and particularly to decline entering upon the question concerning the right claimed by the Spaniards, of searching for illicit goods, stated the difficulty and delicacy of his situation, either in opposing or concurring with the motion. By opposing it, he was in danger of becoming obnoxious to the public, and by his concurrence, might act against his own judgment, and the interests of the king, which are

always inseparable from those of the nation. He then adverted to the danger of creating a misunderstanding between the crown and parliament, if the commons should call for papers, which should be deemed improper for communication. Although he was for treating all the claims of Spain as unfounded; yet he was apprehensive that such difficulties might arise in resisting them, as would require much address and wisdom to remove. The king had, by the most prudent methods of negotiation, endeavoured to reconcile the interests of the kingdom with its peace; and the present was the critical period when the effects of those negotiations were to take place.

He owned that the British merchants and seamen had been often treated most unjustly and inhumanly by the Spanish guarda costas, and that both the honour and interest of the nation were deeply concerned in obtaining reparation for such injuries, and a proper security in future. At the same time, he declared that recourse ought not to be had to arms, while there was any prospect of obtaining redress in a peaceable manner.

"It is without doubt," he said, "a very popular way of arguing, to talk highly of the honour, the courage, and the superior power of this nation; and, I believe, I have as good an opinion of the honour, courage, and power of this nation, as any man can, or ought to have; but other nations must be supposed to have honour as well as we, and all nations generally

have a great opinion of their own courage and power. If we should come to an open rupture with Spain, we might in all probability have the advantage; but victory and success do not always attend upon that side which seems to be the most powerful. Therefore, an open rupture, or declared war between two potent nations, must always be allowed to be an affair of the utmost importance to both; and as this may be the consequence of our present deliberations, we ought to proceed with great coolness, and with the utmost caution."*

He next recapitulated the late treaties and transactions with Spain, and endeavoured to prove, that the inflexibility of the Spaniards was owing to the perplexed state of affairs in Europe since the treaty of Seville, which had prevented the meeting of the commissioners for finally adjusting the respective pretensions of the two countries. He observed, that the claims of the English were not considered, either at home or abroad, to be so clear as they were here represented. He attempted to show, that the Spaniards had hitherto done as much to satisfy the English sufferers as could well be expected; that the distance between Madrid and the West Indies was considerable; that the Spanish governors were extremely insolent, and not subject to sufficient control, and that therefore it was no wonder if the crown sometimes found difficulties in bringing them to reason.

He gave some instances of ships which had

* Chandler.

been unconditionally released by the Spaniards, and of others, on giving security to stand trial whether they had been engaged in illicit trade; and he mentioned several merchants whose claims were likely to be satisfied.*

He did not however, intend to oppose the communication of papers in general; but only of some, which if made public, might occasion much inconvenience. He frankly acknowledged, that the last answer from the Spanish court was unsatisfactory, and if it should be communicated to the house, and from thence, as must unavoidably happen, to the public, the most fatal consequences might be produced. That notwithstanding the harshness of that answer, the ministry had sent to the court of Madrid, some propositions which might tend to soften matters. He said, if they were not soon answered to the satisfaction of the king, he himself would move that every paper relating to Spain should be laid before the house, but till that answer arrived, it would be improper to comply with the motion.

He concluded by moving as an amendment, the omission of "answers from the court of Spain, and the British minister at Madrid." This candid and moderate speech, which was peculiarly adapted to the temper of the house, not inclined to reject the whole motion, and which proved that he did not wish to protract the inquiry longer than prudence and policy directed, had a due effect. The temperate representation

* Tindal.

of the minister, ably enforced by Horace Walpole, Sir William Yonge, Henry Pelham, and Sir Charles Wager, prevailed over the more violent counsels of the opposition, though supported by all the eloquence and abilities of Pulteney, Sir John Barnard, and Sir William Wyndham. The original motion was negatived by a majority of 164 against 99, and the amendment, as proposed by the minister, carried without a division.*

The triumphant majority with which this question was carried, was productive of no essential advantage to the cause which Walpole was so anxious to support. While attempts were making to adjust the differences with Spain, and while the court of Madrid seemed inclined to make due reparation for the injuries complained of, Sir Thomas Fitzgerald, or, as he is usually called, Don Thomas Geraldino, the Spanish minister, was employed in fomenting the disturbances and inflaming the public discontents. He caballed with the leaders in opposition, and acquainted them with the secret information which his instructions or his correspondence enabled him to communicate. He did not hesitate to assert openly that the English ministry imposed upon the people, in pretending that the court of Spain would be inclined to recede, in the smallest degree, from the claim of searching all ships which sailed near their coasts in America. His intemperance gave great advantages to opposition; and in the course of the debates in both houses, many facts were dis-

* Chandler.

closed by the members of that party, which ought to have been confined to the cabinets. The ministry, having soon discovered by whose means they obtained possession of those facts, complained of his imprudence, and desired Mr. Keene to lay the indecency and consequences of his conduct before the court of Madrid. But Geraldino had frustrated the effects of these representations, by stating, that the views and principles, even of the minister himself, and the most pacific part of the English government, were absolutely inconsistent with every maxim of the Spanish monarchy, and the security of its trade. This information found a ready belief at Madrid, and the Spanish ministers, through Geraldino's advice, became persuaded, that they could not be so effectually served as by fomenting and encouraging the discontents of the people of England against their government.*

At this period the house was daily inundated with petitions and papers relating to the inhumanities committed upon the English prisoners taken on board of trading vessels. They represented these prisoners as not only insulted and pillaged, but compelled to work in the Spanish dock yards and fortifications, loaded with irons, subsisting upon loathsome provisions, and overrun with vermin, frequently tortured and imprisoned in dungeons. Several captains and other seamen were examined at the bar of the house, and if full credit be given to the witnesses, the facts were unquestionably proved; but their

* Tindal.

evidence must be received with great caution. They were not examined upon oath, and were not confronted with any testimony on the side of the Spaniards. They were induced by their own interests, and by the hopes of obtaining reparation, to exaggerate their injuries. They saw that it was popular to inveigh against the Spaniards, and were encouraged to render a disastrous tale more disastrous; they were taught to believe, that if they made good their allegations, the minister who had tamely suffered such oppressions would be removed, and that his successors would act with such vigour as to force the king of Spain to indemnify them for their losses and sufferings.*

The captains and seamen who appeared at the bar of the house, gave the most exaggerated accounts of the insults permitted and exercised by the Spaniards; and many related the most incredible tales of horror, which were implicitly believed, almost in proportion to their absurdity.

Among those who were examined, and whose story seemed to make the deepest impression, was one Jenkins. This man was captain of the Rebecca, a trading vessel; he sailed for Jamaica in the beginning of 1731, and was boarded by a guarda costa, and treated with much insult and indignity. In the account which was given at the time, by the periodical papers and the pamphlets of opposition, the Spanish captain is reported to have put the men to the torture, to

* Tindal.

have hanged up Jenkins three times, once with the cabin boy at his feet, and then to have cut off one of his ears, and bid him carry it to his king. On his arrival in England, Jenkins is said to have laid his case before the king, and as some compensation for his treatment, or to pacify him, was appointed captain of an East Indiaman.*

This ridiculous story, which Burke justly calls, "The *Fable* of Jenkins' ears," seems to have made little impression at the time, but it was now revived with additional circumstances of cruelty and insult; and Jenkins was produced at the bar of the house of commons, March 16, to give an account of a transaction which had happened seven years before.†

According to contemporary accounts, he related the transaction, with many additional circumstances of insult and barbarity, and displayed the ear, which he had preserved, as some assert, in a box, and others in a bottle, declaring, that

* Gentleman's Magazine for 1731. Craftsman.

† It was positively asserted in the contemporary publications, that Jenkins was examined at the bar of the house of commons, and gave the evidence mentioned in the text, and it is generally admitted as a fact; yet it is remarkable that no traces of his evidence are to be found in the Journals. The whole that is mentioned in the Journals are the two following passages:

16th March. "Ordered, That Captain Robert Jenkins do attend this house immediately."

17th March. "Ordered, That Captain Robert Jenkins do attend, on Tuesday morning next, the Committee of the whole house, to whom the petition of divers merchants, planters, and others, trading to, and interested in, the British plantations in America, in behalf of themselves, and many others, is referred." But on Tuesday the 21st, there is no farther mention of Jenkins.

after *tearing* it off, the Spaniard had said to him, "Carry it to your king, and tell his majesty that if he were present I would serve him in the same manner." His evidence is mentioned as a model of *noble simplicity*. One point, in particular, was ostentatiously circulated. Being asked by a member what were his thoughts when he found himself in the hands of such a barbarian, he replied, "I recommended my soul to God, and my cause to my country." These words, and the display of his ear, *which, wrapt up in cotton, he always carried about him,* filled the house with indignation.

The effect of this ridiculous story * on the

* See Gentleman's Magazine for July 1736. Where it is said, that the *Spanish* Captain was a Lilliputian, *(English)* Renegado.—London Magazine.—Chandler.—Smollett, vol. 3. p. 19.—Belsham, vol. 2. p. 3.—Bryan Edwards's History of the British West Indies, vol. 1. p. 144. Voltaire, who never spoils a good story in the telling, says, "Le capitaine Espagnol avait saisi le vaisseau de "Jenkins, mis l'equipage aux fers, *fendu le nez et coupé les oreilles* "*au patron*. En cet etat Jenkins se presenta au parlement, &c." Histoire de la Guerre de 1741.

Pope has thus ludicrously mentioned the incident:

"The Spaniards own they did a waggish thing,
"Who cropt our ears, and sent them to the king."

In spite of these authorities, I am inclined to give credit to the suggestion of Tindal, "that Jenkins *lost his ear, or part of his ear, on another occasion*, and pretended it had been cut off by the crew of a guarda costas," vol. 20. p. 372. It would be unjust to the Spaniards not to mention in this place, a counter story, which was no less believed in Spain than the "fable of Jenkins's ears" in England. "Un capitaine Anglois, après avoir, par un trait de perfidie, et sous pretexte de commerce, invité deux gentilhommes Espagnols à bord de son vaisseau, les laissa sans manger pendant deux jours, pour leur extorquer une rançon; mais, comme cet expédient ne lui reussit pas, il coupa à l'un des deux les oreilles et le nez, et le força, le couteau sur le gorge, de les manger; procédé, qui, sans contredit,

nation at large, was proportionate to the sentiments of horror and vengeance it excited in the house of commons. It was made the vehicle of popular frenzy, and so highly inflamed the public mind, that Pulteney declared in parliament, the very name of Jenkins would raise volunteers.

When the nation was irritated by these exaggerated accounts and unwarrantable artifices, to the highest degree, the business was resumed by the commons. On the 30th of March, alderman Perry submitted to a committee of the whole house, a Report which was calculated to augment the general indignation. After the examinations of several witnesses, Murray, was heard as counsel for the petition, and supported, with unusual eloquence, the justice of the complaints.

Pulteney then rose, and in a speech of great length, spirit, and perspicuity, expatiated on the amazing instances of cruelty, barbarity, and injustice, proved at the bar to have been exercised on the king's subjects. He stated the rights of the British nation, which had been controverted and infringed by the Spaniards, and on which he proposed to found his motion; the right of free navigation to every part of the American seas, provided the ships do not touch at any port possessed by the Spaniards; the right of carrying all sorts of goods, merchandise, or effects, from one part of the British dominions

mettoit les Espagnols en droit d'user de représailles; aussi, en usèrent ils à la rigueur." Histoire du Ministère du chevalier Robert Walpole, tom. 3. p. 408.

‡

to the other; to cut logwood in the bay of Campeachy, and to gather salt on the island of Tortuga. He concluded, by proposing resolutions, calculated to assert these rights in the most unequivocal and specific manner.

The minister saw and appreciated the deep impression which the speech had made upon the house, and the manner in which he answered it plainly showed the embarrassment under which he laboured. He said, he did not pretend to call in question any of the rights and privileges which the honourable gentleman had been pleased to enumerate: this nation had an indisputable title to them, no British subject would pretend to controvert any one of them; and he should be as zealous for defending them as the honourable gentleman himself. But though such was his opinion; yet he would not agree that they ought to be vindicated by the house in the manner now proposed, because no British subject could call them in question; and resolutions made by that house would not bind foreign powers. He next contended, that the passing of such resolutions would be not only unnecessary but prejudicial. For although these rights were secured by the law of nations, or by solemn treaties; yet they had never been explicitly acknowledged by Spain, except in such general terms, and by such general words, as only conveyed an implied concession, in the same manner as we possessed Jamaica. But as these general words were as secure and indisputable as the most express declaration, he entreated the house

not to pass any resolution which would preclude the ministers from accepting any such general acknowledgments and concessions. The resolutions proposed would cramp the negotiations, now carrying on. If Spain did not accede to these specific terms, it would occasion a rupture between the two nations, and render peace unattainable, until one of the parties was wholly subdued. It would be as easy, he said, to force them to sign a carte blanche, as to compel them to make such particular concessions as were mentioned in the resolutions; and as the rights in dispute with Spain might be as fully secured by general words in a future treaty, as by particular declarations, he saw no reason for precluding the possibility of such a treaty, which might attain all the ends proposed by the resolutions, and avoid all their inconveniences.

"For this reason," he said, "I shall be against our coming to any peremptory resolutions, with respect to any of the particular rights the Spaniards now pretend to contest; but I shall most readily agree to any motion that can be proposed, for showing it to be our opinion, that our merchants have fully proved their losses, and that the depredations that have been committed are contrary to the law of nations, contrary to the treaties subsisting between the two crowns; in short, that they are every thing bad, and without the least pretence or colour of justice. This, I say, I shall most willingly agree to, because I think the petitioners have fully proved the allegations of their petition. I think they have

fully proved, that the subjects of this kingdom have met with such treatment from the Spanish guarda costas, and governors in America, as deserves the highest resentment. But still, I think, if proper satisfaction and full reparation can be obtained by peaceable means, we ought not to involve the nation in a war, from the event of which we have a great deal to fear; and the utmost we can hope for from the most uninterrupted success, is a proper satisfaction for past injuries, and a proper security against our meeting with any such hereafter, both which we are bound to think there are still hopes of gaining by negotiation; because, if it had been otherwise, his majesty would certainly have acquainted us with it, and have desired us to provide for obtaining by force, what he saw was not to be otherwise obtained." *

He concluded by offering an amendment, which adopted only the first sentence of the proposed resolutions, "That it is the natural and undoubted right of British subjects to sail with their ships on any part of the seas of America, to and from any part of his majesty's dominions." After this sentence the minister proposed to insert, "That the freedom of navigation and commerce, to which the subjects of Great Britain have an undoubted right by the law of nations, and which is not in the least restrained by virtue of any subsisting treaties, has been greatly interrupted by the Spaniards, under pretences altogether groundless and unjust,

* Chandler.

That before and since the execution of the treaty of Seville, and the declaration made by the crown of Spain pursuant thereunto, for the satisfaction and security of the commerce of Great Britain, many unjust seizures and captures have been made, and great depredations committed by the Spaniards, which have been attended with many instances of unheard of cruelty and barbarity. That the frequent applications made to the court of Spain for procuring justice and satisfaction to his majesty's injured subjects, for bringing the offenders to condign punishment, and for preventing the like abuses in future, have proved vain and ineffectual; and the several orders or cedulas, granted by the king of Spain, for restitution and reparation of great losses sustained by the unlawful and unwarrantable seizures and captures made by the Spaniards, have been disobeyed by the Spanish governors, or totally evaded and eluded. And that these violences and depredations have been carried on to the great loss and damage of the subjects of Great Britain trading to America, and in direct violation of the treaties subsisting between the two crowns."*

These amendments occasioned a long and vehement debate, which, according to the opinion of a contemporary author, "is grossly misrepresented in the parliamentary collections of that time. The gentlemen in opposition had not studied the term of contraband goods with sufficient precision, and confounded them with

* Chandler, p. 204.

illicit goods. The difference between the intention and meaning of the treaty concluded with Spain in 1667, and that of 1670, was not sufficiently defined; the former relating to the European commerce, and the latter restricted solely to the American. Neither was there sufficient foundation for a house of parliament to assert the right which the English had of cutting logwood in the bay of Campeachy, and it was certain that right had not only been warmly contested by the Spaniards in former negotiations, but had been tacitly given up by some of the English ministers, and the whole of it was inconsistent with the interest of the South Sea Company. It was maintained by Sir Robert Walpole and his friends, during the course of the debate, that the resolutions moved for by him, contained all that could be reasonably expected from Spain, and that whatever claims the English had to lands in the province of Jucutan, or to cut logwood in the bay of Campeachy, or to other privileges, either of possession or navigation, it could not be affected or weakened by the amendment, which, after a long and vehement debate,* was carried without a division. When the resolution, amended in the committee, was reported to the house by alderman Perry, the minority proposed that it should be re-committed, but the motion was negatived by 224 against 163.† Then alderman Perry carried an address, "beseeching the *king* to use his endeavours to obtain effectual relief

* Tindal, vol. 20. p. 374. † Journals.

for his injured subjects, and to convince the court of Spain that he could no longer suffer such constant and repeated insults and injuries, to the dishonour of his crown, and to the ruin of his trading subjects; assuring the king, that should his friendly instances for procuring justice, and for the future security of their navigation and commerce, which his people have an undoubted right to by treaties and the law of nations, fail of success, the house would effectually support his majesty in taking such measures as honour and justice shall make it necessary to pursue."*

The great object of the minister in moving his amendment was, to prevent any resolution against searching ships, which he well knew would never be agreed to by Spain. But he had no reason to boast of his victory: for on the same day, the house of lords, after a long debate, voted resolutions much stronger than those which had passed the commons, and what rendered this circumstance more extraordinary was, that the ministerial party seemed to have almost adopted the arguments of the opposition, and to have employed all the violent expressions of those who wished to bring on a war. The lords not only asserted the undoubted right of Great Britain to navigate on the American seas, but also "to carry all sorts of goods and merchandise, or effects, from one part of his majesty's dominions to any other part thereof, that no goods, being so carried, are, by any treaty sub-

* Journals.

sisting between the crowns of Great Britain and Spain, to be deemed or taken as contraband or prohibited goods; and that the searching of such ships, on the open seas, under pretence of their carrying contraband or prohibited goods, is a violation and infraction of the treaties subsisting between the two crowns."*

These resolutions were formed into an address, promising the most effectual support, should the king's instances fail of having a due effect.

The king sanctioned these strong resolutions by a no less strong reply: "I am sensibly touched with the many hardships and injuries sustained by my trading subjects in America, from the cruelties and unjust depredations of the Spaniards. You may be assured of my care to procure satisfaction and reparation for the losses they have already suffered, and security for the freedom of navigation for the future; and to maintain to my people the full enjoyment of all the rights to which they are entitled by treaty and the law of nations. I doubt not but I shall have your concurrence for the support of such measures as may be necessary for that purpose."†

As the public mind became more and more exasperated against Spain, and as the pusillanimity of the minister became the constant object of popular invective, the opposition determined to exert one great effort to bring on immediate hostilities, and to preclude the minister from availing

* Lords' Debates. † Tindal, vol. 20. p. 377. Lords' Debates.

himself of the interval which was still left open for negotiation. Pulteney, who conducted this whole business with great address and ability, was the organ of the minority. On the 5th of May, he moved to bring in a bill under the plausible title of effectually securing and encouraging the trade to America. It was to revive part of two acts, passed in the reign of queen Anne, and in effect, if carried, it would have amounted to a declaration of war, and tended to involve the country in contention with all the commercial nations in Europe. The intent of the act was, to give the property of all prizes taken from the Spaniards, after a declaration of war, to the officers and seamen present in the action; head money, or £. 5, for every Spaniard made prisoner at sea, was to be granted to the sailors; and the property of all places taken was to be vested, by the king's patent, in the captors.

During its progress the minister attacked it with great strength of argument. On the 12th of May, he endeavoured to show its impropriety, and pointed out the injustice of particular parts. On the first clause he observed, "That as the bill then stood, if hostilities were immediately to commence against Spain, and a squadron of English ships were to take the whole Plate fleet or flotilla of the Spaniards, with all their register ships, it would become the property of the English seamen, though it was notorious that not one-fifth part of that treasure, in reality, belonged

to the Spaniards, but was the property of the French, the Dutch, and other trading nations of Europe."

To the clause for granting head money he made no objection; he thought it just and reasonable that the sailors in case of a war should have such encouragement, and declared that he would willingly concur in any motion for that purpose.

The third clause he conceived to be highly dangerous, because it would effectually preclude the conclusion of a safe and honourable pacification; as in all negotiations for peace, some places on both sides are usually restored, to facilitate the accommodation, which could not be effected if the king, by letters patent, should part with the property to private owners. In opposition to this clause he urged, that the bill, if passed in the present form, would be attended with the total ruin of the British commerce in Europe. It must give such an alarm to the French for their property, which is even greater than that of the Spaniards on board of the galleons, that they would not hesitate taking part with Spain, and joining their whole naval force to convoy the Spanish merchant fleet to the ports of Europe.

"But a more material consideration still remained. Most of the French, Dutch, and Danish property at sea, was insured in England or Holland in time of peace, and therefore the loss, in fact, must fall upon the British and Dutch insurers, as they could have no pretext to indem-

nify the French and other nations for the losses they would sustain; so that the bill, if passed into a law, might ruin the Dutch as well as the British insurers."

He desired the house to consider, in such an event, what must be the case of the British merchants then residing in Spain, their persons, their ships, and their properties, all which the Spaniards would certainly sequester. "What must the Dutch," said he, "think of such a bill? Or what power in Europe can be our hearty friend, should it, at this time, pass into a law." *

In the course of the debates many personal reflections, highly injurious to his character, were cast on the minister, and a bitter altercation arose between him and Pulteney, who was loudly called to order, and obliged to acknowledge, that the warmth of his temper had transported him to use some unguarded expressions, for which he testified his concern.

In answer to those who alleged he was afraid of a war, because peace was his only safety, Walpole observed, "It is but a mean excuse for a minister, when a wrong step is made in government, to urge that he is not accountable for the events of measures that never were advised by him, and in which he was over-ruled by his superiors. I have always disdained those mean subterfuges; and with what face can I appear again in this house, if full and ample satisfaction is not made, or at least if we do not do our utmost to obtain it, either by fair and peaceable means, or

* Tindal, vol. 20. p. 369 and 370.

by exerting all our strength, in case a war becomes necessary. If my country should call me to account, I would willingly take upon me the blame of every step that has been made by the government, since I had the honour to enter into the administration. As to the common notion of a minister's being afraid to enter upon a war, I do not understand upon what it can be grounded. For my part, I could never see any cause, either from reason or from my own experience, to imagine that a minister is not as safe in time of war, as in time of peace. Nay, if we are to judge by reason alone, it is the interest of a minister, conscious of any mismanagement, that there should be a war; because by a war, the eyes of the public are diverted from examining into his conduct; nor is he accountable for the bad success of a war, as he is for that of an administration."*

The Bill was negatived by a large majority on the 15th of May.†

A few days after this debate, the session was closed by prorogation.

Thus concluded this difficult session, in which the minister contrived to place the disputes with Spain on such a footing as to give an opening to an amicable negotiation, during the course of which, he trusted that a due mixture of vigour, moderation, and forbearance, would induce the court of Madrid to agree to such conditions, as would satisfy the English nation, restore harmony, and prevent a rupture. The resolutions

* Tindal, vol. 20. p. 369 and 370. † Journals.

of the house of commons were transmitted to Mr. Keene, to lay before the king of Spain; letters of reprisals were issued to the merchants; a squadron of ten ships of the line sailed for the Mediterranean, under the command of admiral Haddock; many single ships were sent to America, and the infant colony of Georgia was supplied with troops and stores for resisting the Spaniards, who threatened to invade it from St. Augustine. These precautions for defence and attack were obviously calculated to give weight to the negotiation with Spain, and had their due effect.

CHAPTER 52.

1738—1739.

Difficulties attending the Negotiation with Spain—Articles of the Convention—Protest of Spain—Parliamentary Proceedings—Debates on the Convention.

THE remainder of the year was passed in attempts to adjust the differences between Spain and England.

No negotiation ever commenced with more unfavourable appearances, or was attended with greater difficulties. These difficulties principally arose from the punctilious and inflexible spirit of the Spanish court, the high expectations of the English nation, the discordant resolutions of the lords and commons, and the disputes between the crown of Spain and the South Sea company.

The first difficulty arose from the Spanish court being tremblingly alive to all discussions on points which related to their American possessions; for although Philip appeared well inclined to give full satisfaction for past depredations, and full security for freedom of navigation, which did not favour the illicit commerce, carried on with his subjects in America, or which did not infringe on his sovereign rights; yet he could not be prevailed on to grant any specific

proposition for not *searching* ships, either in the open seas, or hovering on their coasts, under the pretence of trading to and from the British plantations.

The difficulty of managing so capricious a court was increased by the high expectations of the English nation. The people, fired with enthusiasm, and inflamed by exaggerated accounts of Spanish depredations, wildly and imperiously clamoured for redress. They laid their demands of reparation at a very high rate: they required ample satisfaction for past injuries, and full security against future depredations, which security was made to consist in an explicit renunciation of the right of *searching* ships, in all places except the Spanish ports and seas.

Walpole, well aware of the inflexibility of the Spanish court on this delicate question, had contrived to word the resolutions, which passed the commons, in such a manner as to omit the mention of the word *Search*. He had avoided, with great prudence, all specific claims, and confined the expressions of the house to general topics. But this design had been frustrated by the resolutions of the lords, which reduced the question to a specific proposition, and positively declared the illegality of *searching* English vessels on the open seas, and trading to and from the different parts of the British dominions. These discordant resolutions naturally produced numerous embarrassments, and would have occasioned insuperable obstructions, had not the minister resolved to adhere to the decision of the commons.

But the negotiation encountered the greatest difficulty from the disputes of the crown of Spain with the South Sea company. The origin and progress of that company, and the fatal consequences arising from the project of commerce to South America, have been already related.*

Before the Asiento treaty, a very advantageous, though contraband trade, was carried on from Jamaica to the Spanish colonies. The Spanish governors connived at the introduction of negroes, and the importation of English manufactures. The profit of this traffic was certain and expeditious, and was still greater, because it was not attended with the payment of duties to the king of Spain, or other incumbrances.

But this branch of traffic was evidently diminished by the Asiento treaty. It then became the interest of Spain, for the sake of the duties, as well as of the South Sea company, who wished to monopolize the trade to the Spanish West Indies, to stop this commercial intercourse; and many remonstrances were made to government, as well as to the Spanish court, by the directors, who considered all British subjects, trading to the Spanish settlements, as interlopers upon their province. Hence disputes frequently arose between the South Sea company, and the traders of Jamaica; and the directors by their remonstrances, often occasioned the seizure and confiscation of vessels which were taken in the act of carrying on an illicit trade, or with illicit goods

* Chapter 19.

on board. The court of Spain made a merit with the British government, of having endeavoured to check a commerce which was prejudicial to so great a public company ;* at the same time the British traders urged the most violent complaints against the guarda costas, for making these seizures, which they termed illegal and unjust.

The Asiento treaty stipulated the payment of certain duties for the introduction of negroes, and other articles of trade. These had been always paid to the Spanish officers, according to the rate of exchange between Great Britain and Spain, and received without complaint. But as Spain had, several years before this period, given currency to another species of dollars, a claim was now made of the difference between the two species of dollars, ever since the new regulation, under the denomination of arrears. In addition to this, another demand was made, for the fourth of the profits acquired by the annual ship, which was due to the king of Spain. On the other side, the company claimed reparation for the damages sustained by the seizure of their effects in 1718 and 1727, before war had been declared between England and Spain.

In the midst of these difficulties, the minister exerted all his influence, at home and abroad, to settle the differences in a satisfactory manner, or refer the settlement to the decision of plenipotentiaries, by which means farther time would be obtained to prevent the commencement of

* Tindal, vol. 20. p. 411.

hostilities. A double and distinct negotiation was opened, between the ministers and Geraldino in London, and between Keene and la Quadra at Madrid, Walpole wholly influenced the negotiation at London; but he could only modify that which was carrying on at Madrid.

Geraldino having delivered a message, importing that his master was inclined to enter into measures for conciliating past differences, and agreeing upon a method for preventing them in future; an account was stated of the demands on each side, which, after some difficulties, was reduced to a balance of £.140,000, in favour of England, and sent to Mr. Keene to be ratified. But when this agreement was transmitted, the court of Madrid refused to ratify it, declaring that Geraldino had surpassed his powers.

Foiled in this attempt, the minister modified and tempered the violent orders sent from the duke of Newcastle, to Mr. Keene, and exhorted him to use every effort with la Quadra, and to represent the necessity of adjusting the differences amicably.

This pacific spirit fortunately prevailed in the councils of England; and due consideration was paid to the honour, jealousy, and even to the prejudices of Spain. Keene seconded the pacific efforts of the minister with great address and ability, and finally overcame the dilatoriness, the punctilios, and the repugnance of the Spanish court.

A convention was accordingly settled on the following basis: "within six weeks, two pleni-

potentiaries shall meet at Madrid, to regulate the respective pretensions of the two crowns, with relation to the trade and navigation in America and Europe, and to the limits of Florida and Carolina, as well as the other points which remained to be adjusted, according to former treaties. The plenipotentiaries shall finish their conferences within eight months: and in the mean time, no progress shall be made in the fortifications of Florida and Carolina. His Catholic majesty shall within four months from the day of exchanging the ratifications, pay to the king of Great Britain, the sum of ninety-five thousand pounds, as a balance due to Great Britain, after deduction made of the demands of Spain. And this sum shall be employed for the satisfaction, discharge, and payment of the claims of British subjects upon the crown of Spain. This reciprocal discharge, however, shall not extend or relate to the accounts and differences which subsisted between the crown of Spain and the South Sea company, nor to any private contracts between either of the two crowns, or their ministers, with the subjects of the other; or between the subjects of each nation respectively."

In all his conferences with Mr. Keene, la Quadra had insisted that £.68,000 was due to his master from the South Sea company; and had declared that the convention would not be ratified, unless that money was paid. Keene represented, that the interests of the company, and those of England were distinct considerations; and that the convention was a settlement

of accounts between the two nations, the other a private transaction between the king of Spain and the company. He said, if it was proved that £.68,000 was owing, the money should be paid; and this la Quadra considered as a positive promise, that it should be liquidated before the execution of the convention. Accordingly, at the very moment when the convention was to be ratified, the Spanish minister delivered to Keene, a declaration or protest, declaring in due form, that the king of Spain reserved to himself the right of suspending the Asiento treaty, should the company not pay within a short time the £.68,000. Under the validity and force of this protest, and upon the firm supposition that it would not be eluded on any motive or pretext, he was ready to sign the convention. Keene seeing the obstinacy of the Spanish court, knowing the anxiety of the British minister to receive the ratification before the meeting of parliament, and aware, that unless he accepted the protest, the negotiation would be instantly broken off, consented to receive it, though without admitting the fact it assumed, and simply to be transmitted to the consideration of the British cabinet. Clogged with this obstruction, the convention was finally signed at Madrid, and transmitted by a courier to London, who did not arrive till the 15th of January.

The public mind was agitated to a degree of frenzy, and their expectations to a pitch which no reasonable concession could gratify. Besides the infliction of punishment on the Spanish cap-

tains, and others who had committed depredations, they required, that the Spaniards should positively disclaim all right to search British ships in the American seas, and disavow their pretensions to Georgia, and a part of South Carolina; that they should pay £.340,000 as a compensation for the captures and confiscations, to discharge the balance of the account, due to the South Sea company, for the effects confiscated, which amounted to no less a sum than a million sterling; and it was said, that if the nation should not receive satisfaction on these particulars, no justice was procured, and no security obtained. In the midst of these clamours, every eye was directed to the meeting of parliament, which was to assemble on the 18th of January. But the public were disappointed: on that day the parliament was farther prorogued until the first of February, and it was known that the difficulty in adjusting the disputes with Spain, had been the cause of this prorogation.

On the first of February the parliament assembled. The speech from the throne mentioned the ratification of the convention.

"It is now a great satisfaction to me, that I am able to acquaint you, that the measures I have pursued have had so good an effect, that a convention is concluded and signed between me and the king of Spain, whereby, upon consideration had of the demands on both sides, that prince has obliged himself to make reparation to my subjects for their losses, by a certain sti-

pulated payment; and plenipotentiaries are therein named and appointed for regulating, within a limited time, all the grievances and abuses which have hitherto interrupted our commerce and navigation in the American seas; and for settling all matters and disputes, in such a manner, as may for the future prevent and remove all new causes and pretences of complaint, by a strict observance of our mutual treaties, and a just regard to the rights and privileges belonging to each other. I will order the convention, and the separate articles to be laid before you.

"It hath been my principal care to make use of the confidence you reposed in me, in this critical and doubtful conjuncture, with no other view but the general and lasting benefit of my kingdoms; and if all the ends which are to be hoped for, even from successful arms, can be attained without plunging the nation into a war, it must be thought, by all reasonable and unprejudiced persons, the most desirable event."*

The motion for an address encountered violent opposition in both houses. In the lords, however, it passed without a division, by the interposition of the earl of Scarborough and the duke of Argyle, who, though they declared their disapprobation of that thing called a convention, yet conceived it would be irregular to mention it till it was laid before them, and thought that unanimity was highly necessary at the present juncture.

* Journals.

In the commons, an address being moved as usual, in the terms of the speech, Sir William Wyndham objected to all expressions which might appear an approbation of the convention; and therefore proposed omitting the paragraph which alluded to it, and merely to thank the king for his speech, and to assure him that the house would grant the necessary supplies, and endeavour to avoid all heats and animosities.

Sir Robert Walpole, in a long and able speech, defended the conduct of ministers in the negotiation with Spain. He declared that the accommodation was attended with all the advantages which the most successful warfare could have procured. He showed, under the existing circumstances, it was more prudent and beneficial to avoid extremities; that all the commercial nations, even France itself, did not object to the claim of searching and seizing their ships, when taken in the act of illegal trade. He then extolled the convention, with a wantonness of praise not usual with him, and declared he thought it his peculiar happiness, that the nation would deem the influence he possessed, the principal means of its ratification; and that he should not be sorry if it was considered as a measure entirely his own. He finally observed, it was unfair to decide on the merits or demerits of the convention, before it was known; that in a few days it would be submitted to the house, when a candid discussion would take place; and that as there was no reason to deem it con-

trary to the known interest of the nation, he saw no ground for opposing the address. He reminded the house, that the last session he declared himself answerable for the measures pursued by government, while he was minister. He was prepared to make good his promise; all he desired was a candid hearing, and that he hoped would not be denied. He concluded, by opposing the amendment, and supporting the original address.

He was answered by Lyttleton, Sir John Hynde Cotton, and Sir John Barnard, who took notice that the speech itself was most absurdly worded, because it stated, that plenipotentiaries were to regulate the grievances and abuses that had happened to the British subjects, from the insolence and cruelty of the Spaniards. Now to regulate abuses, he said, implied a continuance of them, but only under another form.*

The motion for the address was carried by 234 against 141;† a majority which inspired the minister with unfounded hopes of a quiet and easy session; on the contrary, every measure was adopted, and every expedient resorted to for the purpose of harassing administration, and throwing odium on the measures of government.

Almost the only question which was not resisted was, the proposal for employing 12,000 seamen. The motion for 18,000 land forces was opposed, and a reduction to 12,000, as in

* Tindal, vol. 20, p. 395. † Journals. Chandler.

the last session, moved by Shippen, on the 14th of February, but negatived by 253 against 183.*

Meanwhile the convention had been laid before the house, and referred to a committee; and its contents having been communicated to the public, a general ferment prevailed in the nation, and a violent outcry was raised against the conditions. One article agreed to by the English commissaries, which gave much umbrage, and had a great effect in irritating the public mind was, the claim of £. 60,000, for the ships taken by admiral Byng, off the coast of Sicily, in 1718. The demand was founded on an article in the peace of Madrid, made under the administration of Sunderland; which promised restitution, and was confirmed by the treaty of Seville. This stipulation had never been performed. The claim on the side of the Spaniards still existed in its full force, and therefore, though unpopular, was just and reasonable. Motions being made by the party in opposition, that the petitioners, might be heard by counsel, were warmly opposed by the ministerial party, and negatived, after long and warm debates.† A private petition was also presented on the 26th of February from the owners of a ship taken in 1727, and another upon the capture of the ship Sarah, belonging to Bristol, praying also to be heard by counsel. The minister justly observed, that if the pro-

* Chandler.

† 242 against 207, and 237 against 208. Journals.

prietors of every capture were to be heard by counsel, the house would be solely occupied in such affairs, and could not attend to public business. The question, however, was pressed, and lost only by 13.* This large minority, upon so disputed a point, inspired the opposition with the most sanguine hopes, and encouraged them to persevere.

After various other petitions, both public and private, the convention was first taken into consideration in the house of lords, on the 5th of February. On the 1st of March, lord Cholmondeley moved an address, similar to that which was afterwards proposed in the house of commons, by Horace Walpole. After a warm and vigorous contest, the address was carried by a majority of 95 against 74, but a strong protest was made by nine and thirty peers.† At the head of those who voted in opposition, was the prince of Wales.

Notwithstanding this defeat in the house of lords, the opposition entertained hopes, that the convention would be disapproved and rejected by the commons. At length, the 6th of March was the day appointed for taking into consideration, the various petitions relating to the convention. The members repaired so early to the house, that 100 had taken their seats before eight in the morning. The public attention was no less powerfully attracted to this important debate, the result of which was expected

* 175 to 162, Journals. Tindal, vol. 20. p. 200.

† Lords' Debates.

to decide the fate of the minister. The sixth and seventh were occupied in examining witnesses, and hearing some West India merchants, in support of their petitions.

On the 8th, at half past eleven, Horace Walpole, who thoroughly understood the subject, and had drawn up several papers relative to the transaction, opened the debate by a speech of two hours and a half.* He began by expressing his hopes, that in discussing this important question, on which depended the issue of peace or war, gentlemen would lay aside wit and railing accusations, avoid personalities, not mistake a popular outcry for the voice of the people, as distinguished from that of parliament, and would not be biassed by strong assertions without proof. After making a general observation, that in all differences between two nations, an immediate declaration of war ought not to be the first resolution of either, he observed, the three great points on which he should rest the defence of the convention were, first, honour; second, satisfaction; and third, security. He then undertook to prove, that the honour of the nation was preserved, that satisfaction had been given for past injuries, and security obtained against future grievances.

* Among the Orford Papers, are a few parliamentary memorandums, in the hand-writing of Sir Robert Walpole, taken by him during the first debate on the convention. They are minutes of part of Horace Walpole's speech, Sir Thomas Saunderson's, and Mr. Pitt's. Though short and imperfect, they sufficiently prove the general accuracy of the speeches, given by Chandler on that occasion.

"As to the first position, which regards the honour of the nation; I observe," he said, "gentlemen, in discussing our differences with Spain, are impressed with a notion, that the honour of the nation has been sacrificed. This is a topic on which some have fondly expatiated. I am no less jealous of the national honour than any other gentleman; but true honour is founded on justice and humanity, and not on ambition, false glory, or interest; and I am convinced that this treaty is founded on the former, not on the latter.

"The differences with Spain arose from disputes on matters of right, or from depredations committed by Spanish subjects. The matter of right being incontestible, and the depredations great and frequent, had interest, ambition, or false glory been the objects, the king had sufficient pretence to declare war, without recurring to amicable means. But as these were not his objects, he considered the peace and happiness of his people, as the solid foundation of his glory. He made repeated, but ineffectual applications to Spain, to adjust the differences in an amicable manner. At length, supported by the resolutions of both houses during the last sessions, he made a peremptory demand; and insisted, that unless a speedy and categorical answer was given, recourse must be had to those extremities, which he so much wished to avoid. This declaration, and the preparations which accompanied it, had a due effect. The king of Spain agreed to enter upon an imme-

diate discussion of the rights in dispute, and to make every just compensation. Hence the king, concluding that there was a probability of accommodating differences, could not, on the principles of justice and humanity, commence hostilities, or refuse to accept a preliminary convention, by which satisfaction was to be obtained for past, and security against future injuries.

"Honour may be satisfied by submission, as well as by vindictive justice; and public honour differs essentially from private honour. The honour of the nation can only be injured by some public or national act. When therefore an injury is done, or an affront given by the subjects of one state to those of another, the state, whose subjects have suffered injury, ought to apply to the other for satisfaction, and ought not to consider its honour as affected, till the state, whose subjects committed the insult, has made the act its own, by refusing to punish the transgressors, or to make reparation for damages. Let us apply this reasoning to the present subject. The Spanish depredations have been committed by private subjects; application has been made for reparation. The crown promises reparation.

"This method of agreeing to the convention, and suspending hostilities, until it could be seen what effect it would produce, is not only consonant to honour and justice, but agreeable to the advice given by both houses of parliament. The addresses exhorted the king to use his endea-

vours in obtaining effectual relief for his injured subjects, and promised, if his instances should prove fruitless, to support him in taking such measures, as honour and justice required. It appears, from the articles of this convention, that the king has obtained such satisfaction and such security, as could reasonably be expected.

"With regard to satisfaction for past injuries, the mode of reparation is not only finally adjusted; but the payment of a specific sum is actually promised, within a very short time after the exchange of the ratifications. There being mutual demands for damages sustained, it seemed necessary to settle and balance the account. It then appeared, that our demands upon Spain amounted to - - - £. 200,000
Those of Spain upon us to - - £. 60,000

Which made a balance of - - £. 140,000

This the king of Spain offered to pay by assignments upon his revenues in America. But as we knew the tediousness and precariousness of that fund, it was proposed to make an allowance for prompt payment, on the condition of paying the money in a short time at London. The allowance stipulated was £. 45,000, which reduced the sum due to us to £. 95,000, and this sum his Catholic majesty has expressly promised, by this convention, to pay at London, within four months after the exchange of the ratifications. From hence it appears, that we

have not only obtained all the reparation any reasonable man could expect, but all the reparation we could insist on, with any pretence of justice.

"The next great object under consideration is our future security. Now it is plain, that security depends on those matters of right which are now in dispute, and therefore cannot be effectually provided for, until those rights are fully ascertained. But as this is a discussion which depends not only on several disputable points in the law of nations, but also on the nature and tenor of various treaties, and on many facts and local circumstances, which can only be ascertained in the West Indies, it was impossible to settle the business in a few weeks, or by a preliminary convention. For this reason, this discussion is referred to plenipotentiaries, who are to meet within six weeks after the exchange of the ratifications, and must finally settle the points referred to them within the short term of eight months, which is all that we could expect, and as much as we could, with justice or reason, desire.

"On this account the treaty must be considered as a good preliminary, and such as ought to have been accepted in preference to a war, even had there not been one word in the treaty, which could tend to a presumption that Spain had relinquished any of the rights which were the objects of dispute. But this is not the case. The principal right exercised by Spain, is that of searching British ships in the open seas, and

seizing them, if Spanish money or merchandise are found on board. This right Spain has renounced in the present preliminary, if not by the letter, at least by the spirit of the treaty. This right is not *claimed* by Spain, but *exercised* only. How then could it be remedied but by consent, either by a reparation, or by an explanatory treaty? The reparation is actually made, and the treaty is to follow, which is to prevent future aggressions.

"The preamble of the convention recites all the grievances complained of, and specifies, *visiting, searching, and taking of vessels, and seizing effects.* It acknowledges them to be of such a nature, *that without future care, they might occasion an open rupture between the two crowns.* Here then Spain avows, that the searching of ships is a cause of complaint, and she allows it to be a grievance, which ought to be remedied. But can the exercise of a *just right* be deemed a cause of complaint? Can it be allowed to be a grievance? And is it not a reasonable conclusion that Spain, having by the preamble disclaimed her right, indicates a resolution to disclaim it also in the definitive treaty.

"The court of Madrid, however, has not only acknowledged the searching of ships on the open seas, and confiscating them for having Spanish money and effects on board, to be a grievance which ought to be remedied, but they have in some measure owned it to be wrong. They have allowed it to be an injury,

by giving a reparation for all such captures as are proved to have been illegal. Therefore the plenipotentiaries are not to settle the right, not to determine whether it be a grievance or not, for that is allowed: they are to settle, by a definitive treaty, the means to prevent new abuses, and remove the causes of future complaints. But in this their powers are circumscribed. For the regulations to which they are to accede, must be conformable to the existing treaties. This must be settled within a limited time, and must be ratified by the king; so that should the plenipotentiaries adjust the business in such a manner as not to satisfy the country, they may still be not ratified, and we may then have the choice of war or peace.

"The chief question, therefore, now seems to be, whether we ought to go to war, rather than grant a delay of eight months, for giving full satisfaction and absolute security; and I do not think that any man who considers the present situation of Europe, or the present circumstances of this nation, would be for involving the country in a dangerous and expensive war, rather than grant such a delay.

"In considering this question, I trust that gentlemen will not pretend to decide from general declamations on peace and war; but reflect that the true state of the question rests on the specific circumstances of the present moment, and the dangers of war, as it concerns the present times, conditions, and trade. War, in all situations, even with the fairest prospect of

success, is always dangerous and destructive to a trading nation; it is much more dangerous when the event is doubtful.

"It follows from these premises, that if the situation of Europe was favourable to us, and if our circumstances were also advantageous, we ought not wantonly to engage in war. How much more ought this evil to be avoided, when the state of Europe wears a most unfavourable aspect, and our internal situation is unpromising.

"France is powerful, and governed by wise counsels; tranquil at home, and respected abroad. The sovereign of that country is bound by interest, as well as by the ties of blood, to assist the king of Spain, if he is attacked; and in all probability, a treaty of alliance is now forming, and perhaps concluded, between the two crowns. If we declare war against Spain, we must therefore expect that France will take part with Spain against us; and though I have so good an opinion of my country, as to think we are more than a match for the one, and at least an equal match for the other, yet I cannot be so vain as to imagine we are an equal match for both. Consequently, I must think we have reason to be afraid of sinking under the burthen, unless we can obtain assistance from some of the other great powers."

He then took a view of the state of Europe, which he described as so situated, that England was without a single ally, who was either willing or capable of affording assistance. The Emperor

involved in the misfortunes of the Turkish war, and under the direction of France; the Dutch weak, wavering, and loaded with debts; Sweden wholly governed by France; Denmark and Russia at too great a distance, even if inclined, to act in our favour; the king of Naples disposed to take part with the other branches of the house of Bourbon; and the king of Sardinia incapable of coming forward singly to our assistance.

"This being the state of Europe," he continued, "would it not be the height of folly and madness to engage in hostilities, if we can with honour and security avoid or delay them?

"Our domestic situation is no less unfavourable. We are loaded with burthens which are almost too heavy to bear; the public revenue is scarcely sufficient to supply the expenses of our civil establishment in time of peace. If we enter into war, new taxes must be imposed; the animosities and divisions which prevail too much amongst us will be increased; that party which has been, hitherto suppressed by our vigour and unanimity will again rear its head; our enemies will avail themselves of the war, to favour the cause of the Pretender, and as new burthens are unavoidably laid on the public, these misfortunes will be ascribed to the illustrious family on the throne. France and Spain may pour in their troops upon our coasts, which our fleet cannot always prevent; we shall be thrown into confusion at home, and have neither leisure nor power to distress our enemies, or protect our colonies.

"I feel as much as others for the sufferings of our merchants, for the indignities which have been inflicted on the nation, by the Spanish guarda costas; but national resolutions ought not to be directed by passion. We ought to show proper resentment, but our resentment ought to be governed by prudence; and if it is, we shall suspend it, until Europe presents a more favourable aspect. I am therefore of opinion, that if the convention had been less favourable, it ought, in the present juncture, to have been accepted. But I trust I have shown that we have acquired as much as we could expect from a preliminary treaty, and have every reason to hope, that in the space of eight months we shall obtain, by a definitive treaty, all we can desire."

He then moved an address, "to return thanks to his Majesty for the communication of the convention; for bringing the demands of his subjects to a final determination, and for procuring a speedy payment for the losses sustained by the merchants; declaring their satisfaction in the foundation laid for preventing and removing similar abuses in future, and for preserving peace; to express a reliance on the king, that effectual care would be taken for establishing the freedom of navigation in the American seas; that British subjects may enjoy, unmolested, their undoubted right of navigating and trading to and from any part of his majesty's dominions, without being liable to be stopped, visited, or searched in the open seas, or being

subject to any other violation of the treaties subsisting; and that in settling the limits of his dominions in America, the greatest regard would be had to the rights and possessions belonging to the crown and subject; and to assure the king, that in case his just expectations should not be answered, the house would support him in taking such measures, as might be most conducive to vindicate the honour and dignity of his crown, and the rights of his people."

The address was calculated to obviate the strong objections which were made to the convention, arising from its not being a definitive treaty, not sufficiently explicit, and leaving the point to be decided by future discussion.

The opposition strenuously supported the objections, and in reply to the arguments of Horace Walpole, expatiated on the injured honour of the nation, and the pusillanimity of the minister. They deplored the British trade ruined, British sailors imprisoned and tortured, and the British flag insulted. They exhausted every topic which was calculated to inflame the public mind, and appealed forcibly to the passions and feelings.

The story of Jenkins's ears was not omitted. "Even the Spanish pirate," exclaimed Sir Thomas Saunderson, who spoke first in reply to Horace Walpole, "who cut off captain Jenkins's ear, making use at the same time of the most insulting expression towards the person of our king, an expression which no British subject can decently repeat, an expression which no man that has a regard for his sovereign can ever for-

give. Even this fellow, I say, is suffered to live to enjoy the fruits of his rapine, and remain a living testimony of the cowardly tameness and mean submission of Great Britain, and of the triumphant pride and stubborn haughtiness of Spain."*

In contradiction to the statement of Horace Walpole, lord Gage observed, "The losses sustained by the Spanish depredations, amounted to three hundred and forty thousand pounds. The commissary, by a stroke of his pen, reduced this demand to two hundred thousand pounds; then forty-five thousand were struck off for prompt payment. He then allotted sixty thousand pounds as the remaining part of a debt pretended to be due to Spain, for the destruction of her fleet by Sir George Byng, though it appeared, by the instructions on the table, that Spain had been already amply satisfied on that head. These deductions reduced the balance to ninety-five thousand pounds; but the king of Spain insisted upon the South Sea company's paying immediately the sum of sixty-eight thousand pounds, as a debt due to him on one head of accounts, though, in other articles, his Catholic majesty was indebted to the company a million, over and above this demand. The remainder to be paid by Spain, did not exceed seven and twenty thousand pounds, from which she insisted upon deducting whatever she might have given in satisfaction for any of the British ships that had been taken; and on being al-

* Chandler, vol. 11. p. 15.

lowed the value of the St. Theresa, a Spanish ship which had been seized in the port of Dublin."*

Pitt, who spoke most ably on this occasion, objected to the question, as of too complicated† a nature to be submitted at once to the approbation of the committee. "The address," he said, "was proposed for no other end than to extort an approbation of the convention. He observed, that the house was proceeding upon an artificial ministerial question, covering and taking sanctuary in the royal name, instead of meeting openly, and standing fairly, the direct judgment and sentence of parliament upon the several articles. "Is this," he exclaimed, "any longer a nation? or where is an English parliament, if with more ships in our harbours than in all the navies of Europe, with more than two millions of people in the American colonies, we will bear to hear of the expediency of receiving from Spain, an insecure, unsatisfactory, dishonourable convention, which carries downright subjection in every line."

He said; the great national objection, the searching of ships, stood in the preamble of the convention, as the reproach of the whole, as the strongest evidence of the fatal submission which followed. On the part of Spain, an usurpation, an inhuman tyranny, claimed and exercised over the American seas. On the part of England, an undoubted right by treaties, and from God and

* Smollet, vol. 3. p. 20. Chandler.
† Memorandums of Sir Robert Walpole.

nature, declared and asserted in the resolution of parliament, was now referred to the discussion of plenipotentiaries, on one and the same equal foot. This undoubted right was to be discussed and regulated, and if to regulate, be to prescribe rules (as in all construction it is) this right is, by the express words of the convention, to be given up and sacrificed; for it must cease to be any thing from the moment it is submitted to limits. He concluded in the most energetic language, "This convention, Sir, I think, from my soul, is nothing but a stipulation for national ignominy; an illusory expedient, to baffle the resentment of the nation; a truce, without a suspension of hostilities, on the part of Spain; on the part of England, a suspension, as to Georgia, of the first law of nature, self-preservation and self-defence; a surrender of the rights and trade of England to the mercy of plenipotentiaries; and in this infinitely highest and sacred point, future security, not only inadequate, but directly repugnant to the resolutions of parliament, and the gracious promise of the throne. The complaints of your despairing merchants, the voice of England has condemned it; be the guilt of it upon the head of the adviser; God forbid that this committee should share the guilt by approving it!"*

It was observed by Lyttleton, "The grievances of England admit but of one remedy, a very short and simple one; that our ships shall not be searched on any pretence. This alone can go

* Chandler.

to the root of our grievances, all less than this is trifling, hurtful, and fatal to commerce.

"Had we proceeded conformably to the intentions of parliament, we should either have acted with vigour, or have obtained a real security, in an express acknowledgment of our right not to be searched, as a preliminary *sine quâ non* to our treating at all. This we ought to have insisted on in the words of la Quadra's protest (which is the preliminary *sine quâ non* of that crown) we ought to have insisted on in those very words, "as the precise and essential means to overcome "the so much debated disputes, and that on the "validity and force of this express acknowledg-"ment, the signing the convention may be pro-"ceeded on, and in no other manner." Instead of this, what have we done? We have referred it to plenipotentiaries! Is not this weakening our right? Would you, Sir, submit to a reference, whether you may travel unmolested from your house in town to your house in the country? Your right is clear and undeniable, why would you have it discussed? But much less would you refer it, if two of your judges belonged to a gang, which has often stopped and robbed you in your way thither before.

"But what is this wretched reprieve that we have begged for eight months? Will that do us any good? Will that be worth our acceptance? Do we really flatter ourselves that we are now at peace? Peace is a secure and unmolested enjoyment of our rights. But peace, at the expense of rights, of essential rights, peace exposed to

insults, peace exposed to injuries, is the most abject; is the most deplorable, is the most calamitous circumstance of human affairs. It is the worst effect that could be produced by the most ruinous war. With scorn let us reject it, that to all we have suffered before, to all the accumulated insults ever heaped upon a nation, a worse dishonour may not be added, and that dishonour fall upon the parliament. I therefore give my most hearty negative to this question."*

The minister spoke last in this important debate. His principal efforts were directed to remove the objection of its not being a definitive treaty. He readily allowed that it was not, but contended that it laid the foundation for one. He again adverted to the share which he had taken, in laying this foundation, and declared it to be his greatest boast at present, and would be his greatest honour in succeeding times, to be mentioned as the minister who had endeavoured by this convention to prevent the necessity of making war upon a nation with whom it was our greatest interest to be at peace, at a time when the doubtful situation of Europe left us little hopes of assistance, and gave well-founded apprehensions of being attacked by other powers. He declared that a war with Spain, after the concessions already made, was unjust, impolitic, and dishonourable; that England being a trading nation, the prosperity of that trade ought to be the principal object in

* Chandler.

view. "Admitting, however," he said, "that the convention has not effectually answered the expectations of the house, should it not be considered whether the declaration of war would benefit trade, what prospect of success could be reasonably entertained, and particularly whether even a successful war with Spain, might not involve us in a very doubtful and expensive war with other powers? These considerations seem never once to have occupied the thoughts of those who are adverse to the question. It is laid down as a maxim, that we ought immediately to enter into a war, and yet nothing is allowed for the uncertainty of the event, for the interruption of commerce, and the prodigious expense with which it would be attended. But should we even lay aside these considerations, are we to have no regard to common justice, to those treaties, the observance of which has been so justly contended for? These treaties prohibit all trade with the Spanish West Indies, excepting that carried on by the annual Asiento ship. In contradiction then to these express stipulations, are our ships never to be searched, and is the trade to the Spanish West Indies open to every interloper? For what difference is there between throwing that trade open, and having a liberty not only of approaching their coasts, but even of hovering on them as long as we please, without being stopped or searched? These are the unjust concessions which the advocates of war require. The convention, on the contrary, stipulates that the treaties subsisting

between the two crowns, should be the rule for settling disputes relating to trade. We are, therefore, in no danger of suffering from the convention, because it is admitted that all we ought in reason to claim is, the observance of those treaties." He hoped, therefore, that the address would pass.

The address was carried by a majority of only 28; 260 against 232.*

On the ensuing day, March 9, the report of the resolution in the committee to address the king, being read, the re-commitment was warmly urged. Pulteney, who had reserved himself for this day, opened the debate, and was seconded by Sir William Wyndham. Their speeches were full of declamation and invective, and contained no new arguments. The minister replied in a long and elaborate speech, in which he defended the convention, and explained the treaties of 1667 and 1670. He showed that the demand of not searching British ships was new, and therefore it could not be expected that the Spaniards should renounce a right which they had hitherto exercised, without due examination. He observed, that the business was of so intricate, as well as delicate a nature, that it could not be settled at once, and in a moment, and therefore in reason, justice, and prudence, was properly left to the discussion of the plenipotentiaries. After a few other speeches of little consequence, the motion for a re-commitment was negatived by 244 against 214.†

* Chandler. † Journals.

CHAPTER 53.

1739.

Secession of the Minority—Consequences—Beneficial Acts of Parliament—Danish Subsidy—Attempt to repeal the Test Act—Opposition and Anecdotes of John Duke of Argyle—Vote of Credit—Termination of the Spanish Negotiation—Declaration of War—Conduct of England:—And of Sir Robert Walpole—Divisions in the Cabinet—Lord Hervey made Privy Seal—Disputes with the Duke of Newcastle—Walpole thwarted by the King—Offers to resign.

THE last effort to prevent the address on the convention having proved ineffectual, great part of the minority carried into execution, a design which they had previously concerted. It was no less than to absent themselves, or, as it was called to *secede* from parliament.

Accordingly, Sir William Wyndham, to whose advice, at the instigation of Bolingbroke, this measure has been usually attributed, said, "I have seen with the utmost concern, this shameful, this fatal measure, approved by a majority of but 28, and I now rise to pay my last duty to my country, as a member of this house.

"I was in hope that the many unanswerable arguments urged in the debate against the convention, might have prevailed upon gentlemen for once to have listened to the dictates of reason; for once to have distinguished them-

selves from being a faction, against the liberties and properties of their fellow subjects. I was the more in hopes of this, since in all the companies I have been in from the time this convention has been spoken of, I have not found one single person without doors pretend to justify it. Is it not strange, that the eloquence of one man should have so great an effect within these walls, and the unanimous voice of a brave suffering people without, should have so little? I am surprised that I should be so blind as not to discern one argument that has the least appearance of reason, among all that has been offered, for our agreeing to this address. This must proceed either from the majority of this house being determined by arguments that we have not heard, or from my wanting common sense to comprehend the force of those we have heard. In the first case, I think I cannot, with honour, sit in an assembly determined by motives which I am not at liberty to mention; and if the last is the case, I look upon myself as a very unfit person to serve as a senator. I here, Sir, bid a final adieu to this house. Perhaps when another parliament shall succeed, I may be again at liberty to serve my country in the same capacity. I therefore appeal, Sir, to a future, free, uninfluenced house of commons. Let it be the judge of my conduct, and that of my friends, on this occasion. Mean time, I shall conclude with doing that duty to my country, I am still at liberty to perform, which is to pray for its preservation:

"May, therefore, that Power which has so often and so visibly interposed in behalf of the rights and liberties of this nation, continue its care over us at this worst and most dangerous juncture, whilst the insolence of enemies without, and the influence of corruption within, threaten the ruin of her constitution."

The animated tone of voice, and impassioned gesture which accompanied this effusion, were as dignified and striking, as the expressions were petulant and offensive. The insult offered to the house in calling the majority a faction, raised the indignation of Pelham, and he was in the act of rising to move for commitment to the Tower, when the minister, conscious that such a measure would create a dangerous ferment in the country, prevented him by rising himself, and with an animation and spirit equal to that which had distinguished Sir William Wyndham, said,

"Sir, the measures which the gentleman who spoke last, and his friends may pursue, give me no uneasiness. The friends of the nation, and the house, are obliged to them for pulling off the mask, by making this public declaration. We can be upon our guard against open rebellion, but it is difficult to guard against secret traitors. The faction I speak of, never sat in this house, they never joined in any public measure of the government, but with a view to distress it, and serve a popish interest. The gentleman who is now the mouth of this faction, was looked upon as the head of those traitors,

who, twenty-five years ago, conspired the destruction of their country, and of the royal family, to set a popish pretender upon the throne. He was seized by the vigilance of government, and pardoned by its clemency; but all the use he ungratefully made of that clemency, has been to qualify himself according to *law*, that he and his party may, some time or other, have an opportunity to overthrow all *law*.

"I am only afraid that they will not be so good as their word, and that they will return; for I remember that, in the case of their favourite prelate,* who was impeached of treason, the same gentleman and his faction made the same resolution. They then went off like traitors as they were; but their retreat had not the detestable effect they expected and wished, and therefore they returned. Ever since, Sir, they have persevered in the same treasonable intention of serving that interest, by distressing the government. But I hope their behaviour will unite all true friends of the present happy establishment in his majesty's person and family more firmly than ever; and that the gentlemen who, with good intentions, have been deluded into the like measures, will awaken from their delusion since the trumpet of rebellion is now audaciously sounded."†

The consequence of this measure was, to the seceders, disappointment and speedy repentance

* Atterbury. † Gentleman's Magazine, 1739.

—to the minister, satisfaction and triumph. In fact, they had scarcely declared their resolution, before they saw and appreciated the impropriety and impolicy of the measure. They even flattered themselves with the hopes of being re-called to their posts. Several of the minority, among whom were Sir John Barnard and lord Cornbury, refused to desert their parliamentary stations; and the applause which they received from their constituents, as well as from all moderate persons, was a tacit reflection on the conduct of the others. In fact, the seceders seemed not unwilling to retrieve their error as soon as they had committed it, by availing themselves of the call of the house, which stood for the ensuing Monday, and to have come down in a body for the purpose of enforcing some violent motion.* But the minister suspecting this design, prevented the execution of it, by obtaining an adjournment of the house till Tuesday.† They now experienced the ill policy of their conduct. The nation was not inflamed by their absence. It required no great depth of understanding to comprehend these simple questions: If it be admitted that the constitution was in danger, why did they quit their station? If the majority of the commons was a faction, influenced or corrupted by the minister, why did they make that faction stronger by

* John Selwyn to Stephen Poyntz. Sidney Papers. Correspondence.

† Journals.

retiring from the house, and leaving the minister in possession of means to extend his corruption with greater facility?

It was a great cause of satisfaction and triumph to the minister, who declared that no event during his whole administration, had ever relieved him from more embarrassments, or supplied him with greater means of serving the real interests of his country. He observed, that while he was continually baited by opposition, he could not introduce a single bill, of the most beneficial tendency, which would not meet with resistance, or expose him to obloquy. But as the principal leaders of the minority had retired from parliament, he had an opportunity to propose several, which tended to promote the commerce and manufactures of the country.

In conformity with this plan, he encouraged and invited every scheme which seemed calculated for the advantage of the internal and colonial trade. The manufactures of cloth were increased by the bill, which laid additional duties on the exportation of wool, and facilitated its importation from Ireland. The trade of the British colonies in the West Indies, was highly improved by an act permitting the introduction of sugar into foreign parts, in English bottoms, without first landing it in Great Britain, and by rendering more effectual the duties on foreign sugar and molasses.

A bill also, of considerable public advantage, passed this session, for enlarging the powers of the commissioners of Westminster Bridge, and

for enabling them to execute the whole structure in stone instead of wood.*

During the secession, the minister was embarrassed with a motion for the repeal of the Test act. The dissenters took this opportunity to renew their petition, from a persuasion, that the absence of the Tories would deliver them from so many certain opponents. The Tories themselves, when appealed to by the minister's friends, expressed a malignant satisfaction at his distress. They wished to see in what manner he would conduct himself in so delicate a situation, and seemed not unwilling that it should pass the house of commons, conscious that it would be thrown out by the lords.

The hopes of the dissenters, and the malice of the Tories, were equally baffled by the event. Many of the Whigs, who usually gave their votes in favour of the repeal, yet detested the principles on which the Tories acted. Considering the motion as improperly introduced, with a view to perplex government, they voted against it, and, notwithstanding the absence of the Tories, it was negatived by a larger majority than had ever appeared on that occasion, 188 against 89.†

It was probably at this period, that the minister, vexed at the dissenters, and conscious that he should, by submitting to the repeal, incur the displeasure of the numerous friends to the established church, who supported his measures, by

* Journals. Chandler.

† Mr. Selwyn to the Hon. T. Townshend. Correspondence.

his imprudent frankness disobliged the whole body. A deputation of dissenters waited upon him, and Dr. Chandler, their principal, requested him to take into consideration, his repeated assurances of good will to their cause, and hoped that he would assist in obtaining the repeal of the Test act. He made them the usual answer, that whatever were his private inclinations, the attempt was improper, and the time was not yet arrived. "You have so repeatedly returned this answer," replied Dr. Chandler, "that I trust you will give me leave to ask you when the time will come?" "If you require a specific answer," said the minister, "I will give it you in a word—Never."*

Fortunately for the minister, the absence of the seceding members delivered him from much of that embarrassment which he must have experienced, had they remained in the house during the discussion of the Danish subsidy, which was, nevertheless, a subject of considerable obloquy and misrepresentation. The king, as elector of Hanover, had purchased the castle and lordship of Steinhorst from the duke of Holstein; but the title being disputed by a subject of Denmark, the sovereign ordered a corps of troops to garrison the castle. When a detachment of Hanoverians arrived to take possession, a skirmish ensued, and the Danes were driven from the place. This event inflamed the resentment of the king of Denmark, who made prepa-

* From Dr. Moss, the late Bishop of Bath and Wells, who received it from Chandler himself.

rations as if he intended to revenge the insult, but the affair was soon after compromised. A treaty was arranged with the king of Denmark, who agreed to hold in readiness 6,000 troops for the service of England, on receiving an annual subsidy of 250,000 rix dollars, and 150,000 more when they should be taken into British pay.* As this treaty was concluded soon after the dispute concerning Steinhorst, and as the castle and lordship were at the same time ceded by Denmark to Hanover, the opposition naturally coupled these two events together, and on the 5th of May, when the treaty was announced to the house of commons, they suggested that the compromise had been made at the expense of this country, and that Steinhorst was acquired by British money. Their statement has been adopted as true, and consigned to the pages of history.† This aspersion, however, is contradicted by the secret history of this treaty, which the minister at the time could not avow, and therefore only grounded his defence on the common topic of expediency.

At the period under consideration, a war between England and Spain was unavoidable; and France, foreseeing the probability of being drawn into hostilities, was secretly endeavouring to form alliances with several foreign powers, and to detach others from Great Britain. For this purpose she had secured Sweden, but failing in the attempt to gain Russia, turned her views

* Tindal, vol. 20. p. 414.

† Smollett, vol. 3. p. 13. Belsham, vol. 1. p. 382.

to Denmark. The situation and circumstances of the sovereign Christian the Sixth, gave hopes of success: he had involved himself in great expenses from his love of building, and various projects, and was at this time encumbered with debts. Chavigni, the French minister at Copenhagen, offered the most advantageous terms if Christian would engage in an alliance with France; and as the affair of Steinhorst had recently happened, endeavoured to inflame him against George the Second, and proposed a triple alliance with France and Sweden, by which Russia would be awed, England would have much difficulty in procuring naval stores from the Baltic, and the electorate of Hanover would be exposed to the united arms of the allied powers. The French offered a subsidy of 400,000 rix dollars, for six, eight, or ten years, required no troops, but promised a powerful succour to Denmark if attacked, and demanded no assistance in return if France was invaded. The king of Denmark frankly communicated these proposals to Titley, the English minister at Copenhagen;* observed, that burthened as he was with debts, he required a subsidy; declared that he preferred the alliance of England, and would accept a smaller sum, and agree to less advantageous terms than were offered by France. The treaty was accordingly arranged, and concluded; the insidious designs of France and Sweden were disconcerted, and the peace of the north secured.

* Extracts of Titley's Letters to Lord Harrington. Walpole Papers.

If any proofs were wanting to show that the opposition to the minister was in most cases merely personal, and that every measure, however innocent or indifferent, was supposed to be dictated by him, and promoted for some private view, an incident which passed in the house of lords will leave no doubt on the subject. When the bill for allowing the king to settle an annuity of £.45,000 a year on his younger children, was brought from the commons to the lords, it was observed, in the course of the debate, that the children of the prince of Wales were not only unprovided but *unprayed* for. This observation alluded to the form of prayer for the royal family, issued by the privy council, upon the marriage of the prince of Wales, when the name of the duke of Cumberland stood next to those of the prince and princess, and had not yet been altered. This suggestion was leveled against the minister, as if he had interfered for the purpose of insulting the prince. On this occasion the earl of Wilmington, who seldom spoke in any debate, broke his usual silence, informed the house, that he himself had counseled the king to order the form of prayer as it then stood, and declared that the minister was totally unacquainted with the arrangement. This frank and generous declaration had the desired effect. As soon as it was known that the minister had no concern in the business, the petulance of opposition ceased, and the bill passed without farther impediment.*

* Tindal, vol. 20. p. 417.

At this period the house of lords was no less the theatre of contention than the house of commons; and the number of speakers on the side of opposition great and formidable. The principal speakers on the side of government were, Newcastle, Hardwicke, Hervey, Cholmondeley, Ilay, and Devonshire. Those on the contrary side were, Carteret, Chesterfield, Bathurst, Westmoreland, Bedford, Sandwich, Halifax, Talbot, and Gower.

To this chosen band, was recently added John duke of Argyle and Greenwich, whose principles and motives will be best understood from an account of his previous life and conduct. He was born in 1678, and gave early indications of talents and capacity, which, however, were rather brilliant than solid, and he attained as great a proficiency in classical learning as a desultory application would permit. He discovered a propensity to a military life, and being permitted to embrace the profession of arms, was promoted by king William to the command of a regiment of foot, before he had attained the age of nineteen.

In 1703 he succeeded his father in his titles and estates, and to the consequence of first feudal lord in the Highlands of Scotland. He was appointed member of the privy council, captain of the Scotch horse guards, knight of the Thistle, and one of the extraordinary lords of session. In 1705, he was nominated lord high commissioner to the parliament of Scotland; opened the parliament by a speech, and by his

influence had a great share in promoting the union, though he declined being one of the commissioners. On his return to England, his services were so highly approved that he was created an English peer, by the title of baron of Chatham, and earl of Greenwich. In 1706, 1708, and 1709, he made campaigns under the duke of Marlborough, and distinguished himself on various occasions, particularly at the battles of Ramilies, Oudenarde, and Malplaquet, at the sieges of Ostend and Ghent, and at the assaults of Menin and Tournay. During these campaigns he gave instances of his high spirit and proneness to take offence, by an opposition to the duke of Marlborough, with whom he is said to have been at continued variance. His disgust was carried to so great a height, that in 1710, when it was moved in the house of peers that thanks should be given to the duke of Marlborough, Argyle made some petulant objections to the motion.

His conduct endeared him to Harley and the Tories, who paid great court to a nobleman of his high rank, parliamentary abilities, and military talents, and he was in 1710, invested with the garter. He then quitted the Whigs, whom he had hitherto supported, spoke and voted with the Tories, and joined in the censure that was passed on the late administration.

In consequence of these exertions, he was appointed embassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary to Charles the Third, king of Spain, and commander in chief of the British forces in that

country. During his continuance in that high station, he performed no exploit of consequence, which he imputed to the ministry, who were employed in negotiating the peace of Utrecht. He loudly complained of their neglect, and was so much offended, that although on his return to England he was constituted commander in chief of all the land forces in Scotland, he soon became a violent opponent of Oxford's administration, and resisted the extension of the malt tax to Scotland. He supported the motion, made by the earl of Seafield, to dissolve the union, which he had so great a share in forming, warmly spoke in favour of the proposition, that the protestant succession was in danger, and bitterly censured the peace of Utrecht. In consequence of this opposition, he was removed from all his employments.

On the illness of the queen, which terminated in her death, he repaired, with the duke of Somerset, to the council chamber, insisted that the physicians should be examined; and by his conduct on this occasion, rendered an essential service to the house of Hanover.

On the accession of George the First, his services were not overlooked. He was appointed one of the lords justices till the arrival of the king, restored to his employment of commander in chief of the British forces in Scotland, made a member of the privy council, and governor of Minorca, as well as colonel of the royal regiment of horse guards. He was, at this time, in high favour at court, was selected as one of the com-

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missioners for establishing the household of the prince and princess of Wales, and nominated groom of the stole to the prince.

As commander in chief of the forces in Scotland, he was in 1715 sent to quell the rebellion, and partially defeated the rebels with a much superior force at the battle of Dumblain. His conduct, however, as well as his military operations on this and subsequent occasions, were exposed to much censure. Though he was a man of high spirit and undaunted courage, and always exposed his person more than became the general in chief, yet he was before the engagement irresolute and diffident of his talents. He knew not how to seize the decisive moment of action. When he broke the enemy's left wing, he was hurried on by his ardour to pursue them too far, and on his return to the field of battle found that his own troops had suffered extremely, and that had the enemy taken advantage of their success, the king's army might have been entirely routed. In fact his conduct was rallied by the country people, who said that the general was a much better christian than commander in chief, for he did not let his left hand know what his right hand did.*

He was accused of dilatory measures, and, in his turn, arraigned the ministry for neglect and inconsistency. The letters which passed between him and lord Townshend, are filled with complaints, apologies, and recriminations; and he returned from Scotland as much dissatisfied

* Answer to the Speech of the Duke of Argyle, p. 88.

with the king and ministers as they were dissatisfied with him.*

His situation in the household gave sufficient opportunity to ingratiate himself with the heir apparent. His graceful manners, dignified demeanour, splendid talents, and animated conversation, soon captivated the prince, and excited the jealousy of George the First. On the misunderstanding in the royal family, he attached himself to the son, and was suspected by the king of fomenting the prince's discontent. On this account he was suddenly removed from the post of groom of the stole, and deprived of all his employments, to the great regret of the prince, who placed implicit confidence in him, and his brother the earl of Ilay.

During the king's absence he was much consulted by the prince; and while he was accused by Walpole and Townshend of caballing with the Tories, one of the causes of disgust which the king entertained against those ministers was, that they privately caballed with the duke of Argyle and his brother.†

From the time of his removal he opposed administration with great acrimony, until he was softened by the place of lord steward of the household, which was conferred on him in 1719. From this period he uniformly supported the measures of government, although he was occasionally disgusted with the ministry.

* Correspondence between Lord Townshend and the Duke of Argyle. Townshend Papers.

† See Chapter 15.

In the debates which took place on the murder of captain Porteous, and on the bill of pains and penalties against the provost and city of Edinburgh; he threw out several peevish expressions, testifying his dislike to all kinds of jobs, which was supposed to be leveled against the minister, and seemed to indicate that he was dissatisfied. At the time of the rupture between George the Second and the prince of Wales, his discontent became more manifest, and he finally entered the lists of opposition during the discussion of Spanish affairs.

It is still undecided whether his accession to the side of opposition was derived from the quick sight which he is said to have possessed, *when* it was time to leave a minister from disgust and disappointment, or from disapprobation of measures. But whatever were the motives which influenced his conduct, his defection was a severe blow to the minister. He gave fresh spirits and energy to the cause of opposition in the house of lords. His violent and declamatory speeches were calculated to make a deep impression on the public mind; while his personal weight and interest in the house of commons seduced several members from the ministerial interest, amongst whom was Dodington, who had long attached himself to the duke, and advised him as a species of *demigod.*

The aversion which the anti-ministerial party had conceived against the duke of Argyle, was now converted into respect and love. He who was bitterly arraigned for political versatility,

was now applauded for virtue and patriotism. His opposition to the minister cancelled at once all former errors, and he suddenly became the idol of the party.* Pulteney paid a high eulogium to his great merit and exalted talents, while he was present in the house of commons, for the purpose of hearing the debate. Speaking of those who had voted against the convention, Pulteney observed, "They who had the courage, Sir, to follow the dictates of their own breasts (I do not mean to reflect on any gentleman) were disabled from farther serving their country in a military capacity. One exception, Sir, I know there is, and I need not tell gentlemen that I have in my eye, one military person, great

* The progress of party prejudice is well exemplified in the "Opinions of Sarah, duchess of Marlborough," who entertained a strong contempt and aversion for the duke of Argyle, while he supported Sir Robert Walpole, but instantly changed her opinion in his favour, when the duke entered the lists of opposition.

"1738.—It is said the duke of Argyle is extremely angry. It is a common saying, that when a house is to fall, the rats go away; but I doubt there is nothing of that in this case, and I rather think the anger must be to have some new demand satisfied, which is a thing his grace has often done.

"1738.—After all the great noise there was of the duke of Argyle's being irreconcilably angry with Sir Robert; every thing has past since in the house without his saying the least word to show it; *that* was no surprise to me.

"1738-9.—I think it is quite sure that the duke of Argyle is determined, and has thrown away the scabbard, as he used to have a very quick sight *when* it was time to leave a minister.

"1738-9.—The duke of Argyle spoke charmingly (on the convention with Spain) and has certainly thrown away the scabbard.

"1738-9.—All the hatred I once had to him, upon a very just account, is now turned into love.

"1740-1.—The duke of Argyle spoke as well as it was possible for a man to do."

in his character, great in his capacity, great in the important offices he has discharged, who wants nothing to make him still greater, but to be stripped of all the posts, of all the places he now enjoys.—But that, Sir, they dare not do." *

In the common topics of opposition, the duke of Argyle felt no embarrassment; but when an accusation was brought forwards for past transactions, which had taken place during his continuance in administration, in the support of which he had been active and zealous, he felt himself in an awkward situation. It was not possible to reconcile his invective against the minister with his well-known and often repeated apothegm, That all first ministers had been faulty, but that Sir Robert Walpole had the least faults of any minister with whom he had ever been concerned.† As an apology, therefore, for his first supporting, and afterwards arraigning the same measures, he insisted that the minister had engrossed the whole power of government, that the privy council was excluded from all knowledge of the proceedings, and that the measures were only submitted to them for approbation, not for examination. He mentioned himself as a witness to the truth of this statement. For although he was commander in chief, yet the knowledge of many material transactions had been withheld from him. He said there were two cabinet councils in the kingdom, the king had one, and the minister another, and

* Tindal, vol. 20. p. 404.

† The Duke of Argyle's Speech answered, p. 31, 32.

that the king's knew little or nothing of what was done in the other. He thus endeavoured to exculpate himself, and to throw on the minister the whole blame of past transactions, which he and his party were disposed to arraign, as arguments for his removal.

The duke of Argyle was a warm, impetuous, and animated orator. He possessed great fluency of language and elegance of diction. His speeches were highly declamatory, and filled with affected expressions of candour, conviction, and disinterestedness. They had always a considerable effect, by appearing to be unpremeditated effusions, flowing from the occasion, and adapted to the moment. They were accompanied with all the graces of elocution, gesture, and dignity of manner. His eloquence was highly celebrated by Pope.

"Argyle, the state's whole thunder born to wield,
"And shake alike the senate and the field."

And Thomson says of him,

——— "from his rich tongue
"Persuasion flows, and wins the high debate."

As there was great reason to apprehend that the court of Spain would not fulfil its engagements, by paying the £.95,000, the king sent a message to parliament, expressing hopes that they would enable him to make such farther augmentations of his forces, both by sea and land, and to concert such measures as the emergency of affairs might require during the recess of parliament. The house of lords returned an address,

assuring him of their support. The commons resolved, that towards enabling the king to augment his forces, if necessary, the sum of £.500,000 should be granted.

They also voted £.60,000, which according to the terms of the convention, were due to Spain for the ships taken in 1718, and this sum, with the £.95,000, was to be applied towards making satisfaction to his majesty's injured subjects for their losses. The session was closed on the 14th of June, by prorogation. The king's message, the address of the lords, and resolutions of the commons, were sent to Mr. Keene, who was ordered to acquaint la Quadra, now marquis of Villarias, that this was a provisional power which was thought necessary to be given during the recess of parliament, should any emergency occur which concerned the honour, interest, and safety of the British dominions, and ought not to excite jealousy; and that the grant of the £.60,000, to be paid by England, if Spain would discharge the £.95,000, within the time limited by the convention, was a proof of the king's design to fulfil his engagements. But this conciliating language had no effect. The face of affairs was totally changed in Spain. The haughty and insulting language of the parliament and people disgusted and provoked that sensitive nation, and for some time all the actions of the Spanish court fully proved their determined resolution not to fulfil the terms of the convention.

The Spanish ministers made bitter remon-

strances on the continuance of admiral Haddock's fleet in the Mediterranean, which they considered as an insult to their coasts.*

When the plenipotentiaries met, on the 5th of May, the Spanish full powers were not so extensive as the British, and the meeting was adjourned on that account. On the 17th, Villarias declared, on application from the South Sea company, that the king of Spain would listen to no proposal on their part, until the £.68,000 was paid. The full powers being allowed to be drawn up in due form, May 23, la Quintana, one of the Spanish plenipotentiaries announced in the name of his master, that while the British squadron remained in the Mediterranean, no *grace or facilities* were to be expected, that the English were to be treated according to the rules of the most rigid justice, as the honour of the king of Spain would not permit any condescension while such a scourge hung over them. Philip the Fifth himself bitterly complained to Mr. Keene of the insult offered to his honour, by the continuance of the British squadron on his coast, and declared, that as the South Sea company "refused to pay the £.68,000, he thought himself at liberty to revoke the Asiento for negroes, and to seize their effects as an indemnification for that sum."†

After this audience, Villarias signified to Mr. Keene, that his master considered the peace at an end, as there was no dependence on the pro-

* Account of the negotiation with Spain, Walpole Papers.

† Tindal, vol. 20. p. 419.

mises of the British court. He insisted on the claim of searching ships in the American seas, and concluded by intimating, that if that claim was not admitted as the basis of future negotiations, there could be no occasion for any farther conference.* This was justly considered as a prelude to the declaration of war. The most vigorous preparations were made in England for offensive operations; Haddock, who was cruising off Cadiz, was considerably reinforced; Sir John Norris hoisted the union flag on board the Namur, at Chatham; Sir Chaloner Ogle was ordered to the West Indies with a large force, while Horace Walpole embarked for Holland to require the quota of troops, stipulated by treaties in case of a war.

The ministry had sent to Mr. Keene his last instructions, which were, to declare that the king insisted on a full renunciation on the part of Spain, of all claims for searching British ships, as the basis of a future treaty, and that the honour of the British crown and nation would not suffer any farther negotiation, but upon that condition. He likewise demanded, in very peremptory terms, the immediate execution of all that had been stipulated on the part of Spain, by the convention, and that the British rights to Georgia and Carolina should be expressly acknowledged in the future treaty. He farther observed, that the failure of the Spanish crown to fulfil the terms of the convention, had given a new turn to the state of affairs between the two

* Tindal, vol. 20. p. 419.

courts, which entitled his Britannic majesty to be more peremptory, and to rise in his demands; especially considering the vast expenses which the Spanish breach of faith had obliged Great Britain to incur, in armaments both by sea and land. Mr. Keene, as usual, received an evasive answer; but renewed his applications to the cabinet of Madrid, and firmly announced the resolution of his court, to grant their subjects liberty to make reprisals on the Spaniards, as well as his orders to leave Spain if he did not immediately receive a satisfactory answer.*

The reply amounted to a declaration of war. The Spanish court, secretly instigated by the French, who were eager to obtain the Asiento contract, and to become the carriers of the Spanish trade into the West Indies, rejected so dishonourable a compromise, and prepared for hostilities with unusual activity. The British cabinet issued letters of reprisal, and Admiral Vernon was sent with nine men of war to intercept the Azogue ships in their passage from America to Spain, and then to reduce Porto Bello.

The declaration of war against Spain, issued October 19, was received by all ranks and distinctions of men, with a degree of enthusiasm and joy, which announced the general frenzy of the nation. The bells† were pealed in all the

* Tindal, vol. 20. p. 421.

† It is recorded, that Sir Robert Walpole hearing the bells ringing, inquired the cause of such rejoicings, and was informed that the bells were ringing for the declaration of war. They now *ring* the bells, he replied, but they will soon *wring* their hands.

churches of London; huzzas and acclamations resounded on all sides; a numerous procession attended the heralds into the city, and the prince of Wales did not deem it a degradation to accompany it, and to stop at the door of the Rose Tavern, Temple Bar, and drink success to the war. The stocks, which had been some time on the decline, rose instantaneously. This unusual circumstance, at the opening of a war, was owing to the sanguine expectation, that hostilities would be carried on at the expense of the enemy. The possessions of Spain in the West Indies were considered as likely to fall an easy prey to the British adventurers. The merchants anticipated the monopoly of the commerce with South America, and the possessions of the mines of Peru and Potosi. But these idle dreams of riches and conquest soon proved fallacious; what the minister had foreseen, now happened; England stood singly engaged in war without an ally.

The Spanish manifesto fully justified the conduct of Spain, and proved, that though in the refusal to pay the £. 95,000, she appeared to be the aggressor, the English were the real aggressors, and that while affecting to comply with the letter, they had violated the spirit of the treaty. France artfully availed herself of these circumstances. While she armed both by sea and land, with a view to intimidate England, and to join Spain, whenever a favourable opportunity should occur, she artfully offered her mediation to compose the differences, and prevailed on the

Dutch to maintain a state of neutrality, by threatening them with an army of 50,000 men towards the Low Countries, and alluring them with hopes of sharing the spoils of the trade which the English carried on to Spanish America.

On reviewing the conduct of England, from the renewal of the disputes concerning the Spanish depredations in 1737, to the declaration of war, we shall not hesitate to confess, that it was inconsistent, unjust, haughty, and violent.

The British nation listened only to one side of the question, gave implicit credit to all the exaggerated accounts of the cruelties committed by the Spaniards without due evidence, and without noticing the violations of express treaties by the British traders. The difficulty of obtaining an accurate statement of facts, which had passed in the American seas, was seldom taken into consideration. Instant and full repa ration for damages, not sufficiently authenticated, and always over-rated, was loudly and repeatedly called for. The cry of *No search* echoed from one part of the kingdom to another, and reverberated from London to Madrid. The common topics of justice and humanity were forgotten amidst the public ardor; a general enthusiasm pervaded all ranks of people, and the religious crusade against the Saracens, in an age of bigotry and ignorance, was not prosecuted with greater fervor than the commercial crusade against Spain, in an enlightened century. The crown of Spain was reviled and degraded in the eyes of Europe, by the petu-

lance of declamatory eloquence; imperious messages were sent to Madrid, and the most haughty and irritable court in Europe, was provoked and insulted beyond the possibility of farther forbearance.

The public conduct of the minister is also liable to much animadversion, though from a different cause.

Burke says, "I observed one fault in his general proceeding. He never manfully put forward the entire strength of his cause. He temporised; he managed; and adopting very nearly the sentiments of his adversaries, he opposed their inferences. This, for a political commander, is the choice of a weak post. His adversaries had the better of the argument, as he handled it, not, as the reason and justice of his cause enabled him to manage it. I say this, after having seen, and with some care examined the original documents, concerning certain important transactions of those times. They perfectly satisfied me of the extreme injustice of that war, and of the falsehood of the colours, which, to his own ruin, and guided by a mistaken policy, he suffered to be daubed over that measure. Some years after, it was my fortune to converse with many of the principal actors against that minister, and with those who principally excited that clamour. None of them, no not one, did in the least defend the measure, or attempt to justify their conduct, which they as freely condemned as they would have done in commenting upon any proceeding in history in

which they were totally unconcerned. Thus it will be. They who stir up the people to improper desires, whether of peace or war, will be condemned by themselves. They who weakly yield to them, will be condemned by history."*

These observations are perfectly just; but the sagacious author did not sufficiently consider, and perhaps did not know, the delicate situation of the minister, and the embarrassments under which he laboured at this particular juncture. Walpole himself well knew the strength of the arguments, which might have been produced against the assertions of the minority. He was aware, that the British who traded to the West Indies, were principally engaged in carrying on an illicit trade, and in importing and exporting illicit goods; that few of the captures were illegal; and that, though the Spaniards, might in some instances have transgressed the bounds of strict justice, yet in general they were sufficiently vindicated by the conduct and behaviour of the British traders.

The fact was, that the nation could not hear the truth; the minds of all men were so inflamed with tales of cruelties, that every attempt to contradict them was wholly ineffectual. The minister himself could not venture to question or decry them.

An insinuation thrown out by some of his friends, that the British ships in the West Indies carried on smuggling, contrary to treaties, and to the true interest of the fair trader, was re-

* Thoughts on a Regicide Peace, p. 23.

ceived with high indignation, and represented by opposition, as a reflection cast upon the whole body of English merchants in America.* Nor need any other proof be given of the general infatuation and frenzy, which prevented the voice of truth and reason from being heard, than that the fable of Jenkins's ears was fully credited, and no one could venture to call in question the truth of that absurd story. Walpole was obliged, therefore, to confine the defence of the convention to the expediency of the measure, the inconveniences of war, and the advantages of peace, with such general arguments as were answered and nullified by impassioned appeals to the feelings and honour of an injured and insulted nation.

His opposition to the war, drew upon him odium and unpopularity from all quarters. Even many of those who voted with him from personal considerations, were equally free in their complaints of his indolence, want of spirit, and aversion to vigorous measures, for vindicating the national honour, and chastising the insolence of Spain.

The king was eager for war. Inspired by a martial spirit and natural magnanimity, he was disposed to seek reparation of injuries by military operations, preferably to the slower and less splendid methods of negotiation.

By the death of queen Caroline, Walpole had lost his principal protectress; one who uniformly appreciated his counsels and promoted his views;

* Tindal, vol. 20. p. 366.

who maintained in the king's mind those favourable sentiments, which those who were about his person, were labouring to change. Her decease gave full scope to the intrigues of a strong party in the cabinet, who were inclined for war, and opposed those measures which the minister wished to adopt.

The duke of Newcastle was peculiarly vehement in supporting the contents of the petition, which the merchants had delivered to the king in 1737. In conformity to this statement of the grievances, he drew up an angry memorial, which Keene was ordered to present to the Spanish ministers, and in which he endeavoured to prove that the Spaniards had broken the articles in several treaties, and particularly alluded to the treaty of 1667. This memorial was forwarded to Keene,* to be presented to the court of Madrid, and Horace Walpole was ordered to draw up a similar one, to be presented to the States General. But the sagacity of Horace Walpole saw the fact in a very different light. He was fully sensible that the treaty of 1667, referred only to the trade which Great Britain was permitted to carry on to the Spanish dominions in Europe, and had no reference to the American commerce. This opinion he represented with his usual freedom, and proved by undoubted documents.†

Sir Robert Walpole adopted this mode of thinking, and objected to Newcastle's memorial.

* Keene and Walpole Papers. † Walpole Papers.

But being unsupported by the king, and the other members of the cabinet, he was compelled to withdraw his opposition, and assent to the measure. Even when the convention was ratified, and the settlement of the disputes referred to an amicable composition, Newcastle adopted the opinions and language of opposition, and observed, in a letter to the British minister at Madrid:

"His majesty's view and design is, that this commission should not, like some former ones, be drawn into length and produce no effect: but that all points in dispute between the two crowns, may be thoroughly examined, and finally settled and adjusted; so that a perfect good understanding may be established between the two nations; *which is impossible to be done, as long as the depredations continue in any manner; therefore the king does expect, that the freedom of navigation of his subjects may be effectually secured to them; that they may neither be liable to be taken or searched, in their navigation in the American seas, to and from any part of his majesty's dominions.**

The chancellor, lord Hardwicke, a man of moderation, good sense, and candour, was of the same opinion with the duke of Newcastle, and spoke with such vehemence in the house of lords against the depredations, and in favour of compulsory measures, that Walpole, who stood

* Duke of Newcastle to Benjamin Keene, Whitehall, January 26, 1737-8. Walpole Papers.

behind the throne, exclaimed to those who were near him, "Bravo colonel York, Bravo."* Lord Harrington inclined to the sentiments of Newcastle and Hardwicke. The earl of Wilmington was always blindly attached to the opinion of the king, and therefore favoured the war. He repented that he had declined accepting the employments which had been offered to him on the death of George the First; his hopes revived on the decease of queen Caroline; he aspired to the station of first minister, and by his secret influence in the closet, occasionally counteracted the advice of Walpole.

The only members of the cabinet of whom Walpole was secure, were Sir Charles Wager; the earl of Godolphin, who had succeeded lord Lonsdale in the office of privy seal, which he retained in compliance with the wishes of the minister, to whom he was uniformly and inviolably attached; and the duke of Devonshire, who was occasionally absent in Ireland.

Many measures were also adopted, which he did not approve, and many persons appointed to commands, particularly admiral Vernon, in opposition to his wishes. The letters of reprisal were issued contrary to his opinion. Newcastle had adapted the declaration of war to the public opinion,† in direct contradiction to the known sentiments of the minister, on the basis of principles which held up the delay of hostilities to censure, and, as the minister thought, with a

* From the late earl of Hardwicke.

† Duke of Newcastle to lord Hardwicke, September 30, 1739.

view to cast an odium upon him. The declaration had been approved by the cabinet, and was on the point of being issued in this form, when a strong remonstrance of Horace Walpole to the lord chancellor,* induced the secretary of state to amend this important paper.

A still greater source of discord had been derived from the resolution of the minister to obtain the privy seal for lord Hervey, who had uniformly proved his attachment, and had strenuously supported his administration, by his speeches, and his pen. Godolphin, had announced his intention of retiring, but delayed the resignation at the request of Walpole, until the difficulties which obstructed the nomination of Hervey could be removed. That nobleman had, by his sarcastic and petulant raillery, rendered himself so highly disagreeable to Newcastle, that in a letter to lord chancellor Hardwicke, he observed, "Sir Robert Walpole and Pulteney are not more opposite in the house of commons, than lord Hervey and I are, with regard to our mutual inclinations to each other, in our house."† He strongly represented the objections to his promotion, and the ill effects which would be derived from it. He proposed, rather than submit, that the duke of Grafton, the lord chancellor, his brother Mr. Pelham, and himself should resign; and even if they should not accede to this measure, avowed his resolu-

* Horace Walpole to lord Hardwicke. Correspondence.

† Duke of Newcastle to lord Hardwicke, October 14, 1739. Hardwicke Papers.

tion singly to retire, rather than bear what he considered as a personal insult. He made also strong remonstrances on the subject to Sir Robert Walpole, and a violent altercation passed between them at Claremont. The minister persevered in his resolution. In April 1740, Lord Hervey was at length appointed lord privy seal, and Newcastle, either finding his co-adjutors not inclined to resign, in compliance with his request, or softened by the chancellor and his brother, suppressed his disgust, and acquiesced in the nomination.

The situation of the minister was rendered still more irksome, by the occasional ill-humour of the king, who thwarted his views, at the very moment when he most wanted his assistance. Several instances of a pertinacious refusal of his just requests, appeared in the course of this summer. But one in particular, will serve to show the extreme embarrassments under which he laboured.

Horace Walpole had served, with little interruption, in the quality of envoy, plenipotentiary, or embassador, from 1722 to 1739. He had performed his functions with unremitting assiduity and address; and had rendered himself eminently useful in the conduct of foreign affairs. He had been for some time weary of his employment, and expressed an earnest desire to return to England. On the death of queen Caroline, his situation abroad became more difficult. Contradictory orders were occasionally issued from London and Hanover. The opinion and

advice which he freely gave, were not always congenial to the German prejudices of the king. He incurred displeasure by the frankness with which he declared his sentiments on all occasions, and by his courage in opposing the petty electoral views, which sometimes interfered with the grand interests of Great Britain and Europe. Frequent bickerings with lord Harrington, rendered his continuance abroad more and more irksome; he resisted all the importunities of his brother, enforced by the earnest representation of the chancellor, for whom he entertained the highest esteem, and persevered in his resolution to retire from the diplomatic line.

The state of affairs, and temper of the Dutch, who were pressed by England on one side, and by France on the other, required a person of great abilities, address, and circumspection; agreeable to the leading men of the republic, well acquainted with the forms of their complicated constitution, and capable of obviating the dilatoriness of their counsels. It was necessary also, that the successor should be attached to the minister, and likely to follow the directions of Horace Walpole. Such a person was Robert Trevor, second son of lord Trevor, who had, from the commencement of Horace Walpole's embassy to the Hague, served in the capacity of private secretary, and during his absence, had acted as chargé d'affaires. He was distinguished no less for discretion than talents, and his dispatches were peculiarly interesting and animated.

But the king had entertained a violent prejudice against Trevor; and though he could not with justice or policy object to his nomination, yet he clogged his mission with so many difficulties as nearly prevented it. When those difficulties were finally overcome, he positively refused to confer on him the united character of envoy and plenipotentiary, with the salary of eight pounds a day; but insisted that he should be only appointed envoy, with a salary of no more than five pounds. The repeated solicitations of Walpole, in compliance with his brother's wishes, had no effect, all his attempts to persuade the king were fruitless.

Trevor had received from Horace Walpole a promise of his recommendation; and as he knew the affection of Sir Robert Walpole for his brother, and believed his influence all powerful in the closet, he had considered his appointment to the offices of envoy and plenipotentiary, as certain as if it had passed the great seal. When, therefore, the minister acquainted him with the king's inflexibility, he declined accepting the grant of envoy alone, as degrading to himself, and declared that, on account of the smallness of his own fortune, the salary of five pounds a day was insufficient to maintain an establishment, in a style and manner conformable to usage, and consonant to the dignity of his station.

The minister never felt himself more chagrined. He was concerned lest his brother should impute to him a lukewarmness in pro-

moting his friend, and procuring a post which had been solemnly promised. He was apprehensive lest Trevor, conceiving his influence over the king greater than it really was, should suspect him of duplicity, and he was at the same time convinced, that no person was so proper to be employed at the Hague. He therefore frankly represented his situation to his brother; he expressed his inability to prevail over the king, and intimated, that should Trevor decline the appointment of envoy, the consequence would be the increase of the king's disgust, and the nomination of another person, who might be both incapable of discharging his functions, and disagreeable to themselves. He therefore earnestly entreated his brother to obtain the acquiescence of his friend. His exhortation prevailed; Trevor, at the suggestion of Horace Walpole, complied, and succeeded him at the Hague, in the quality of envoy only.

Horace Walpole returned to England, and soon afterwards resigned the place of cofferer of the household for a tellership of the exchequer. He took no farther share in public business, than in giving his assistance to his brother in the management of foreign affairs, and strenuously supporting his measures in parliament.

Thus situated, and thus embarrassed, thwarted by the king, counteracted by the cabinet, reviled by the nation, and compelled to declare war against his own opinion, a simple and natural question arises; Why did he not resign? Why did he still maintain a post exposed to so many

difficulties, and subject to so much obloquy? His intimate friends urged him to take this step, when the convention was carried in the house of commons by a majority of 28. In fact, he did request the king's permission to resign.* He stated his embarrassments. He observed, that his opposition to this war would be always imputed as a crime, and that ill success would be attributed to him. The king remonstrated against this resolution, exclaiming, "Will you desert me in my greatest difficulties?" and refused to admit his resignation. The minister reiterated his wishes, and the king again imposed silence in so authoritative a manner, that he acquiesced, and remained at the helm.

But his compliance with the king's commands is by no means sufficient for his justification. Had he come forward on this occasion, and declared that he had opposed the war as unjust, and contrary to the interests of his country; but finding the people clamorous for hostilities, he would therefore quit a station which he could not preserve with dignity, as he was unwilling to conduct the helm of government, when he could not guide it at his own discretion, and to be responsible for measures which he did not approve. Had he acted this noble and dignified part, he would have risen in the opinion of his own age, and have secured the applause of posterity.

The consequence of his continuance in office was repeated mortifications from those with

* Correspondence between Horace Walpole and Etough. Walpole and Etough Papers.

whom he acted, and insults from those who opposed him; and in less than two years from this period, he was reduced to a compulsory resignation.

The truth is, he had neither resolution nor inclination to persevere in a sacrifice, which circumstances seemed to require, and to quit a station which long possession had endeared to him. But ministers are but men: human nature does not reach to perfection; and who ever quitted power without a sigh, or looked back to it without regret?

CHAPTER 54.

1739—1741.

Meeting of Parliament—Return of the Seceders—Efforts of Opposition—Embarrassments of Walpole—Supplies—Capture of Porto-Bello—Expedition to America—Altercations in the Cabinet—Foreign Affairs—Death of the King of Prussia—Of the Emperor—Invasion of Silesia.

THE declaration of war rendered it necessary that the parliament should be assembled at an earlier season than usual. The king, in his speech from the throne, November 15, 1739, spoke a language which could not have been stronger, had it been dictated by opposition. In the opening, he observed, "The present posture of our affairs has obliged me to call you together at this time, sooner than has been usual of late years, that I may have the immediate advice and assistance of my parliament, at this critical and important conjuncture. I have, in all my proceedings with the court of Spain, acted agreeably to the sense of both houses, and therefore I can make no doubt, but I shall meet with a ready and vigorous support, in this just and necessary war, which the repeated injuries and violence committed by that nation, upon the navigation and commerce of these kingdoms,

and their obstinacy and notorious violation of the most solemn engagements, have rendered unavoidable."

He then mentioned the augmentation of his forces, and his confidence in being furnished with the necessary supplies. After adverting to the heats and animosities which had, with the greatest industry, been fomented throughout the kingdom, and had chiefly encouraged the proceedings of the court of Spain, he concluded by observing, "Union among all those who have nothing at heart but the true interest of Great Britain, and a becoming zeal in the defence of my kingdoms, and in the support of the common cause of our country, with as general a concurrence in carrying on the war, as there has appeared for engaging in it, will make the court of Spain repent the wrongs they have done us; and convince those, who mean the subversion of the present establishment, that this nation is determined, and able, both to vindicate their injured honour, and to defend themselves against all our open and secret enemies, both at home and abroad."*

In the house of lords, the address passed, though not without much altercation from the peers in opposition, at the mention of heats and animosities, and on a division, the numbers were 68 against 41.†

In the commons it occasioned a warm and violent debate, which did not so much relate to the subject of the address, as to the return of

* Journals. Chandler. † Lords' Debates.

the seceding members to their duty. Mr. Archer having moved the address, which was, as usual, the echo of the speech, Pulteney began by vindicating the secession. He enforced the necessity of that measure, for the purpose of clearing their characters to posterity, from the imputation of sitting in an assembly, where a determined majority gave a sanction to measures, evidently disgraceful to the king and the nation. "This step," he said, "however it has been hitherto censured, will I hope, for the future, be treated in a different manner; for it is fully justified by the declaration of war, so universally approved, that any farther vindication will be superfluous. There is not an assertion maintained in it, that was not, almost in the same words, insisted upon by those who opposed the convention. Since that time, there has not one event happened, that was not then foreseen and foretold. But give me leave to say, Sir, that though the treatment which we have since received from the court of Spain may have swelled the account, yet it has furnished us with no new reason for declaring war; the same provocations have only been repeated, and nothing but longer patience has added to the justice of our cause. The same violation of treaties, the same instances of injustice and barbarity, the same disregard to the law of nations, which are laid down as the reasons of this declaration, were then too flagrant to be denied, and too contemptuous to be borne. Nor can anyone reason be alleged for justifying our going to war now, that was not of equal

force before the convention.' After that was ratified, and after the address of parliament to his majesty on that head, there was indeed some sort of pretext for not commencing hostilities; because you had laid yourselves under a kind of obligation, to see if the court of Spain would fulfil their part of the stipulations; but this was a reason that could have no place before that conduct was entered into, and approved. It is therefore evident, that if the war be now necessary, it was necessary before the convention. Of this necessity the gentlemen (known, however improperly, by the name of *Seceders*) were then fully convinced. They saw, instead of that ardour of resentment, and that zeal for the honour of Britain, which such indignities ought to have produced, nothing but meanness, and tameness, and submission; and the natural consequences, a low, temporary expedient, a shameful convention, a convention which, had not the Spaniards madly broken it, must have ended in our ruin, must have thrown our own navigation into the hands of our enemies. To such a conduct as this they could give no sanction; they saw that all opposition was ineffectual, and that their presence was only made use of, that what was already determined, might be ratified by the plausible appearance of a fair debate. They therefore seceded, if that word must be used on this occasion, and refused to countenance measures which they could neither approve nor defeat.

"The state of affairs is now changed. The

measures of the ministry are now altered; and the same regard for the honour and welfare of their country, that determined these gentlemen to withdraw their countenance from such a conduct as they thought had a tendency to destroy them, the same has brought them hither once more, to give their advice and assistance in those measures, which they then pointed out, as the only means of asserting and retrieving them." He then observed, that the only method to preserve the trade and navigation of Great Britain from any future violation was, to attack the Spanish settlements in the West Indies, and to prevent any minister from giving up our conquests, under any pretence whatsoever; declared his readiness to support ministry in carrying on the war with vigour and advantage; expressed his wishes, that no mention had been made of heats and animosities in the king's speech, and thought that the dignity and reputation of the house would be consulted, if the address should take no notice of that clause in the speech.*

To this Sir Robert Walpole replied: "After what passed last session, and after the repeated declarations of the honourable gentleman who spoke last, and his friends, I little expected that we should have this session been again favoured with their company. I am always pleased, Sir, when I see gentlemen in the way of their duty, and glad that these gentlemen have returned to their's; though, to say the truth, I was in no great concern, lest the service either of his ma-

* Chandler.

jesty or the nation should suffer by their absence. I believe the nation is generally sensible, that the many useful and popular acts, which passed towards the end of last session, were greatly forwarded and facilitated by the secession of these gentlemen, and if they are returned, only to oppose and perplex, I shall not at all be sorry if they secede again.

"The honourable gentleman who spoke last said, that they took this step, because he and his friends conceived that measures were pursued which tended to ruin the honour and interest of this nation, and that they have returned to their duty, because these measures are now at an end. Sir, I don't remember any one step which was taken in the whole of our transactions with Spain, that has not been fully canvassed in parliament, and as fully approved. The parliament can best judge what is fit or not to be done, and while I have the honour of bearing any share in the administration I shall think myself safe, and my actions completely justified, if they are, after mature deliberation, approved by a British parliament. The stale argument of corruption never shall have any weight with me. It has been the common refuge of the disappointed and disaffected, ever since government had a being; and it is an accusation, that like all other charges, though unsupported by proof, if advanced against the best and most disinterested administration, and pushed with a becoming violence, a pretended zeal for the public good, will never fail to meet applause among the populace. I

cannot, however, believe that the honourable gentleman and his friends, have found any reason to boast of the effects produced by their secession upon the minds of the people; for it was a very new way of defending the interests of their constituents, to desert them, when they apprehended them to be endangered. I should not have touched so much upon this subject, had I not been in a manner called upon to do it, by what fell from the honourable gentleman who spoke last. I shall now proceed to take some notice of what he further advanced.

"The declaration of war against Spain, is neither more nor less than the consequence, which the king again and again informed this house, would arise from the Spaniards persisting in their refusal to do justice to his injured subjects; and what the honourable gentleman has said upon that head, amounts to nothing more than that, after the Spaniards had absolutely refused to do that justice, his majesty proceeded to those measures which he had then more than once promised to take. I am sorry that the honourable gentleman should so far distrust the royal assurances, as rather to absent himself from his duty as a member of this house, than put any confidence in his majesty's promise. But give me leave to say, Sir, that from the well known character of his majesty, this declaration of war is no more than what the honourable gentleman and his friends had not only reason, but a right to expect, even at the time of their secession, if the continued injustice of the court

of Spain should make it necessary to have recourse to arms. So that upon the whole, I neither see how his majesty's not issuing this declaration of war, when they were pleased to require it, was a good reason for their running from their duty; nor how its being issued at last is any apology for their return."*

After a few reflections on the impropriety of Pulteney's proposals, and some observations by Sir John Barnard, on the want of convoys, which were answered by Sir Charles Wager, the address was carried without a division.

The conduct of the minister during this whole session, proved the extreme embarrassments under which he laboured, the little dependence he could generally place on those who supported him, and the effect which the public voice had upon the decisions of the commons.

On the 16th of November, when Pulteney moved to bring in the bill for the security of trade and encouragement of seamen, which had been thrown out last session by the exertions of the minister, he opposed it with much warmth, and demanded that the measure should be postponed for the purpose of taking it into consideration.† On the first reading, November 26, however, he did not venture to continue his opposition, and after a slight animadversion by Horace Walpole, it passed without a division. Although the minister appreciated the injustice of depriving the public of all share in the prize money, and of annihilating at once a great

* Chandler. † Ibid.

source of revenue, which might assist government in carrying on the war, yet he dreaded to resist so popular a measure, and to offend the navy of England.

The agreement of the minister to the war, and the vigorous manner in which it was conducted, distressed opposition by taking from them the most popular topic of declamation and obloquy. They endeavoured, therefore, to introduce motions of so violent a tendency, as should preclude all hopes of a reconciliation with Spain, trusting that the minister would oppose them as being contradictory to his pacific system, and would by that resistance increase the national aversion. Accordingly, Sir William Wyndham, after a violent philippic against administration, moved, on the 21st of February, 1740, for an address, testifying a resolution to support the king in the prosecution of the war, and beseeching him "never to admit of any treaty of peace with Spain, unless the acknowledgment of our natural and indubitable right to navigate in the American seas, to and from any part of his majesty's dominions, without being searched, visited, or stopped, under any pretence whatsoever, shall have been first obtained, as a preliminary thereto."*

As the tendency of this motion was well understood by the minister, and as it was made with the hopes of being rejected, he disappointed their views. After briefly vindicating his conduct from the reproaches of Sir William Wynd-

* Journals. Tindal.

ham, he declared that he was the first to agree to the motion, and it accordingly passed, without a dissenting voice. The concurrence of the lords being obtained, the address was accordingly presented by both houses.

In February when the place bill was brought before the house, the minister spoke against it with great strength of argument. All his efforts, however, could only procure a small majority of 16; 222 against 206.† The cause of this numerous minority, was principally owing to the approach of a general election, which influenced many who favoured administration, to vote for the question.

The efforts of opposition compelled him to relinquish a bill, to which he had paid considerable attention, and which he thought essentially necessary for the speedy equipment of the fleet. Government felt sensible inconveniences from their inability to man the ships of war. According to an account given in the preceding year, upon a medium no more than twenty-one thousand five hundred and sixteen seamen had been mustered on board the royal navy, from the 31st of December, 1738 to the 31st of December 1739. The public clamour at the same time, on account of the numerous captures made by the Spaniards, hourly increasing, produced many warm petitions and remonstrances. The method of impressing served only to increase the discontent of the

* Journals. Chandler, vol. 11. where see Walpole's admirable speech on the occasion, p. 233.

merchants, who were perpetually plying both houses of parliament with complaints of their trade being neglected. The matter was therefore referred to a committee, who found invincible obstacles in their endeavours to remedy the inconvenience any other way, than by establishing a general register of all seamen and watermen capable of service. A bill to this effect was accordingly presented to the house by Sir Charles Wager on the 5th of February.*

The opposition fairly allowed the expediency of the bill; but expatiated with great effect on the hardships which it would entail upon the seaman, who must appear whenever summoned, at all hazards, whatever might be the circumstances of his family, or the state of his private affairs. He must, in many cases, expose himself to the penalties of the act, or leave his children at a time when his assistance and direction were absolutely necessary. He must, if he should by any misfortune or negligence, be encumbered with debt, either fall under the distresses which the breach of this law would bring upon him, or lie at the mercy of his creditors, perhaps exasperated by long disappointments, or by long practice of severity hardened in oppression. Pulteney proposed to defer the second reading a few days, and to print the bill for the consideration of the house.

To these arguments the minister replied, by observing, "The impress of seamen, to which government must always have recourse in times

* Tindal, p. 450. Chandler.

of emergency, is neither eligible nor legal; it is ineffectual and insufficient for the attainment of its end; the delay in procuring sailors at the commencement of a war is a general grievance, and a great obstruction to offensive operations, and to the acquisition of conquests which would be easy at first, but afterwards became difficult. While we are publishing proclamations," he added, " issuing warrants for impresses, and gleaning up our sailors by single men, our secrets are betrayed, and our enterprizes defeated." He did not, however, object to the proposal for printing the bill, and delaying the second reading a proper time, which was ordered accordingly.

During this suspension, great outcry was raised against the bill, as founded on French edicts, and as tending to the introduction of French measures and French despotism; and the restrictions which it would have imposed on the sailors, which were not inconsiderable, were as usual exaggerated. The public mind was inflamed to such a degree, that when presented to be read a second time, it was received with a silent horror, as a transcript of the French edict for the same purport, and tending to enslave the most useful body of men in the kingdom. Sir Charles Wager and Sir John Norris, who had prepared the bill, candidly admitted the charge, that it was founded on a similar ordinance, but declared that it was the only expedient they could devise, to effect the purpose for which it was designed. The minister, however, was

disinclined to support a bill, against which such strong objections were made: he was therefore one of the first to suggest the propriety of dropping it, and it was accordingly rejected. "A motion was then made for the house to resolve itself into a committee the Monday following, to consider of the heads of a bill, for the further and better encouragement of seamen to enter into his majesty's service. But this resolution, however well intended, never produced the desired effect, though it seemed to be agreed upon by all parties, that a register was absolutely necessary; and the first resolution which the committee came to, was, that a voluntary register of seamen would be of great utility to the kingdom.*"

The opponents of the minister, sensible that he was not adequately supported, pressed him with motions tending to increase his embarrassment. Some prizes having been taken by the Spaniards, a motion was made in the house of commons, March 25, "For a list of ships of war employed as cruizers, for the protection of trade on this side Cape Finisterre, since the 10th of July last, distinguishing the time each ship was ordered to remain, and the time such ship did actually remain on such cruize, together with the reasons of her returning to any port of this

* Tindal, vol. 20. p. 451. Sir Charles Wager introduced a similar bill in the next session, though with an alteration of the most exceptionable parts. Every paragraph was obstinately contested. Some exceptionable clauses were corrected, and several amendments made; after a long and well fought opposition, it passed by 155 against 79.

kingdom." But as the rejection of this motion was highly arraigned, the minister agreed on the following day to address the king "to give directions, that besides the ships of war employed against the enemy, a sufficient number of ships may be appointed to cruize in proper stations, for the effectual protection of trade." The public was extremely surprised that the ministry suffered this motion to pass, as it carried an oblique reflection upon themselves. But the truth was, that about this time, both the French and Dutch, under pretext of neutrality, had commenced carriers to the Spaniards, and upon being visited by the British ships, had made strong complaints that such practices were not warranted by the laws of nations, or by treaties. The court of England in answer, told them, that their complaints should be examined; but chose to leave it to the parliament, to express the sense of the public, in a matter that so nearly touched the national interest. When the address was presented, the king replied, "All possible care has been taken in carrying on the war against Spain, in the most proper and effectual manner, and at the same time, for protecting the trade of my subjects; and you may be assured, that the same care shall be continued." In consequence of this address, however, the building of twenty gun ships to act against the enemy's privateers was hastened, and reinforcements sent to admiral Haddock in the Mediterranean.*

* Tindal.

But a still more dangerous measure was enforced by the opposition, which I shall give in the words of the contemporary historian so often quoted. "An embargo upon all shipping, except coasters, had continued, by order of the lords of the admiralty, from the 1st of February to the 28th of March, when a petition from the merchants and owners of ships, and others concerned in manufactures and commerce, was sent to the house of commons, complaining of the great hardships the continuance of the embargo brought upon trade in general; and containing some insinuations as if it had been continued through wantonness. The fact was, that the petitioners had been amongst the loudest in the outcry raised against government for not protecting their trade; and as that clamour increased, the necessity of employing more seamen increased likewise. The lords of the admiralty had employed every fair means in their power to procure seamen, but without success, till they were reduced to the disagreeable alternative of either imposing the embargo, or permitting the service of the public to suffer. To give all the ease, however, in their power to trade, they soon took off the embargo on foreign ships, and acquainted the masters of British ships, that they were willing to take it off entirely, if every master or merchant, or owner of a ship, would, in proportion to their number of hands, contribute to the supply of the navy. Though nothing could be more reasonable, and indeed, necessary,

than this conduct, yet it was represented in the anti-ministerial speeches and writings, as an intolerable oppression upon commerce, calculated with a view to make the city of London, and the trading part of the nation, weary of the war. The ministry, however, did not think fit to comply with the prayer of the petition, which was, to be heard by counsel against the embargo. They very justly thought, that to admit counsel on such a head, was stripping his majesty and the government of one of their most unquestionable prerogatives; and the motion was therefore rejected by a majority of 166 against 95. This seasonable firmness of the government was attended with very good effects; for the merchants, at last, agreed to carry one third of their crew landsmen, and to furnish one man in four to the king's ships; upon which condition their ships had protections granted them, and about the 14th of April, the embargo was taken off from all merchants ships in the ports of Great Britain and Ireland outward bound."*

Almost the only proposals of the minister which the minority did not resist, were those which related to supplies. In this instance they were as liberal in granting the public money, as if they had forgotten their own repeated assertions, that the nation had been so much impoverished by Walpole, as to be incapable of bearing farther burthens. The land tax was raised to four shillings in the pound: twelve

* Tindal vol. 20. p. 456.

hundred thousand pounds were taken from the sinking fund, and the whole amount of the supplies came to £.4,059,722.

Many excellent laws in favour of commerce and navigation were passed during this session, and premiums were continued for the importation of masts, pitch, and tar; for encouraging the Greenland fishery, by allowing an additional bounty to all ships employed in the whale fishery, during the war, and for protecting the men from impressment.

Not long before the prorogation of parliament, the news of the capture of Porto Bello, by Vernon, reached London; and as the admiral was strongly supported by opposition, and considered as personally obnoxious to the minister, so favourable an opportunity of distressing him, was not omitted. In March, during the public rejoicings, the house of lords sent an address to the commons for their concurrence, in which they congratulated the king on the glorious success of his arms, under the command of admiral Vernon, by taking Porto Bello with only six ships of war. When the address was brought to the commons, the words, 'with six ships of war only,' were omitted. "But several of Vernon's friends, who had heard him declare in the house, that he could take Porto Bello with that force, insisted upon the insertion of those words. They were opposed by the few of the ministerial party who were in the house, as conveying a reproachful insinuation against the memory of admiral Hosier, and only serving to revive the animo-

sities of the public; but the addition was carried by 36 against 31, and being agreed to by the peers, was presented accordingly." It is justly observed by Tindal, "A Roman consul, after reducing a province, never received greater marks of public applause from his country, than admiral Vernon did upon the demolition of Porto Bello. His name, not only amongst the lower, but the most distinguished ranks, became proverbial for courage; his exploit was exaggerated beyond measure; meanings were suggested that never were intended, and consequences were drawn that never followed. The opposition, who counted upon Vernon as a creature of their own preferring, resolved to avail themselves of his name, and some of their heads entered into a correspondence with him, which has been since published, and in which they represented the minister and his friends, as secret enemies to his person and success, and themselves as the patrons of his glory, and the sureties for his conduct to the public. A man of Vernon's warm constitution and resentful temper, could not but be affected with those representations which he thought came from his friends; and he conceived a deep dislike to every person employed, and every measure concerted for the public service, because he thought all came from the minister or his friends; and indeed, most of the terrible misfortunes that afterwards attended the British arms in America, were owing to his invincible prepossessions."*

* Tindal, vol. 20. p. 456.

An expedition was prepared to intercept the Spanish fleet, which was ready to sail from Ferrol; the command was given to Sir John Norris, and the duke of Cumberland served on board the Victory as a volunteer. The accident of two ships running foul of each other, and the prevalence of contrary winds, frustrated the object of the armament, and they were obliged to remain in Torbay, till intelligence was received that the Spanish fleet had proceeded for America. A small squadron, commanded by commodore Anson, sailed for the South Sea, and to assist Vernon. But the greatest expectation was excited by a formidable fleet of seven-and-twenty ships of the line, besides frigates, fire ships, bomb ketches, and tenders, equipped for the attack of the northern coast of New Spain, under Sir Chaloner Ogle. In the West Indies they joined Vernon, who assumed the command, and united to this formidable fleet, his own successful squadron. The troops on board were commanded by lord Cathcart, but he unfortunately died at Dominica, and was succeeded by general Wentworth, between whom and the admiral an implacable animosity subsisted. To this is ascribed the failure of the enterprize, though, undoubtedly, many natural causes of sickness, and bad weather, materially co-operated. The restraint the commanders felt in acting, from their uncertainty with respect to the intentions of the French, who had a strong squadron in those seas, under the marquis d'Antin, and who used

every artifice and finesse which they thought themselves safe in displaying, was also a principal cause of the ill success. Vernon made an attempt on Carthagena, which with all the force he possessed, and the advantage of being restrained by no specific orders, was unsuccessful and inglorious. The captures made at sea, far from having a good effect, created animosities between the soldiers and sailors. Sickness raged, and a great mortality prevailed. An unsuccessful attempt on the island of Cuba, completed the chagrin, disappointment, and impatience of the men; and this powerful fleet, the operations of which had fixed the attention of all Europe, and made the friends of Spain despair of her empire in the New World, returned to England without having performed any thing to compensate for the expense of its equipment.*

Not to interrupt the thread of the narrative, I have thus brought down the account of these expeditions, the failure of which drew so much unmerited censure on the administration of Walpole, to a period posterior to the events immediately under consideration.

Soon after the prorogation of parliament, and the king's departure for Hanover, the division in the cabinet increased to so high a degree, that at one time, the continuance of Walpole and Newcastle in office seemed incompatible; and it appears that Walpole, notwithstanding the approach of a new parliament, had resolved to

* Tindal.

obtain his dismission, even in the king's absence. A temporary reconciliation was, however, effected, by the intervention of Horace Walpole, Pelham, and lord Hardwicke, and promises were made on both sides to act with renewed cordiality. But the promises of statesmen are fickle, and soon forgotten. Although a dissolution of the ministry was prevented, yet the same jealousy still subsisted. The most violent and indecorous altercations took place at the meeting of the lords of regency; and after the return of the king, even in the anti-chamber. Walpole seems occasionally to have lost his usual moderation and good temper, and to have adopted the peevish fretfulness of Newcastle.

It was the object of Newcastle to send all the ships which could be spared to America, for the purpose of ensuring success to the expedition in that quarter. Walpole thought that the affairs of Europe were too *much* sacrificed to those of America, and was apprehensive lest the coast of England should be left exposed. The Grafton, of 70 guns, being disabled from going to the West Indies, it was proposed in the council of regency, to send the Salisbury, a 60 gun ship, in her room. To this the minister objected, and peevishly exclaimed, "What, may not one poor ship be left at home? Must every accident be risked for the West Indies, and no consideration paid to this country?" Newcastle having replied, that the number of Sir Chaloner Ogle's squadron ought not to be diminished, Walpole made a long speech, in the course of

which, he exclaimed with great heat, "I oppose nothing, I give into every thing, am said to do every thing, am to answer for every thing, and yet, God knows, I dare not do what I think right. I am of opinion for leaving more ships of Sir Chaloner Ogle's squadron behind; but I *dare not*, I *will not*, make any alteration;" and when the archbishop of Canterbury proposed that the matter should be taken into consideration another day, he opposed it, and said, "Let them go, let them go."*

But a scene of still more petulant altercation took place soon after the king's return from Hanover. A difference of opinion had prevailed in the cabinet, concerning the mode of applying to the courts of Vienna, Berlin, and Petersburgh, in which the sentiments of Walpole had been over-ruled, and he bitterly complained to the king, that the divisions of the cabinet obstructed public business. In the next audience, the king remonstrated with the duke of Newcastle and Harrington; and said, "As to the business in parliament, I do not value the opposition, if all my servants act together, and are united; but if they thwart one another, and create difficulties in transacting public business, then indeed it will be another case." Coming out of the closet, the duke met Walpole, and mentioned the disagreeable expressions which he had just heard, insinuating, in reproachful language, that they had been

* The duke of Newcastle to lord Hardwicke, October 1, 1740. Hardwicke Papers.

used at his suggestion. Walpole denied the imputation, though he acknowledged that he coincided in the sentiment. Newcastle said, "When measures are agreed amongst us, it is very right that every body should support them, but not to have the liberty of giving one's opinion before they are agreed, is very wrong." Walpole indignantly replied, "What do you mean? The war is your's. You have had the conduct of it. I wish you joy of it." The duke denied the fact, and they parted in mutual digust.*

The situation of continental affairs was not such as to compensate for the miscarriages in America, or to assist in composing the growing feuds in the cabinet.

An apparent harmony and good understanding had continued between the courts of Versailles and St. James's, during the progress of the negotiation which terminated in the peace between the Emperor and the allies. Fleury and Walpole, both anxious to maintain tranquillity, courted each other with affected expressions of good will and amity; and lord Waldegrave, the channel of their mutual intercourse, ably seconded the views of the British minister. The dismission of Chauvelin, which had been chiefly occasioned, or precipitated, by the representations of Waldegrave, did not render the French cabinet intrinsically more favourable to England. Amelot, who succeeded him, was of a pliant disposition, and wholly subservient to Fleury.

* The duke of Newcastle to lord Hardwicke, October 25, 1740.

The two nations were as opposite in their political sentiments, as their shores to each other.* During the progress of the disputes with Spain, Fleury affected to act a conciliating part, and tendered his good offices; but when the rupture took place, the French, however disposed to assist Spain, were not, from the decline of their naval force, in a condition to act with effect and energy. But when Fleury, deriving fond expectations from the pacific sentiments of Walpole, attempted to intimidate England, by declaring that any conquests in Spanish America would be the signal of immediate hostilities, and would inevitably bring on a general war in Europe, the British cabinet spurned at these menaces, and continued the expeditions to the West Indies. Alarmed at this unexpected firmness, Fleury anxiously proposed the mediation of France, and even offered to secure the payment of the £.95,000, which the king of Spain had refused to liquidate. But such was the temper of the English nation, and such the rancour against Spain, that the minister, however well inclined to an accommodation, could not venture to listen to any proposal of peace, and the mediation was declined.

The French cabinet foreseeing, that if no compromise was effected, hostilities were inevitable, concluded, in the midst of their amicable overtures to England, a family compact with Spain, and laboured in every part of Europe to form alliances, and to insulate England from the con-

* Littora Littoribus contraria.

tinent. They influenced, either in a direct or indirect manner, the wavering and pusillanimous counsels of the Dutch republic, who weakly considered the Spanish war as foreign to their interests as a dispute between Nadir Shah and the Great Mogul. They governed Sweden, directed the Porte, swayed the Imperial cabinet, and gave an impulse to most of the German princes.

Walpole, aware of these intrigues and efforts, counteracted them by similar exertions. Subsidiary treaties were made with Denmark, and with the king of Sweden, as Landgrave of Hesse Cassel, by which 6,000 Danes, and 6,000 Hessians were to be held in readiness to be taken into British pay. Trevor, who had succeeded Horace Walpole at the Hague, strained every nerve to rouse the Dutch from their supineness and apathy. The British minister at St. Petersburgh, acquired an ascendancy in the Russian cabinet; and Robinson succeeded in rouzing the Emperor to a sense of the disgraceful situation into which he had been plunged by the preponderance of French counsels, and in stimulating his fears and jealousies at the boundless ambition of the house of Bourbon.

In the midst of these transactions, the death of Frederick-William, king of Prussia, opened a new scene of intrigue and exertion, between the two rival courts, and Berlin became the center of negotiations which were to pacify or convulse Europe. Frederick-William, who united the discordant qualities of a pacific and military

sovereign, and who loved the image, while he dreaded the reality of war, had continued, almost during his whole reign, in a state of wise, but calumniated inaction. His son and successor, Frederick the Second, whom poets and historians have styled *the Great*, was a prince of aspiring ambition, and possessed of talents, equally calculated for negotiation or action. He listened with affected complacency to the respective overtures of France and England, without declaring his designs, and watched for a favourable opportunity to employ the well organised army which he inherited from his father, to his own glory and interest.

The time seemed favourable to allay the jealousy which had so long subsisted between the houses of Brunswick and Brandenburgh. This had long been a favourite measure with Walpole, who had in vain endeavoured to reconcile their jarring interests. He now succeeded in overcoming the pertinacity of the king, and in fixing the wavering resolutions of the cabinet. At his instigation, a plan of a grand confederacy against the house of Bourbon, of which the king of Prussia was to be the soul, was formed by Horace Walpole,* approved by the duke of Newcastle, and submitted to the king.

While this measure was in agitation, with a fair prospect of success, the death of the Emperor, Charles the Sixth, and of the Czarina Anne, totally changed the system of European politics, and deranged the measures of the British

* Walpole Papers.

cabinet. In virtue of the Pragmatic Sanction, Maria-Theresa, eldest daughter of the deceased Emperor, instantly succeeded to the whole Austrian inheritance. She was acknowledged by all the powers of Europe, except the elector of Bavaria, who had alone refused to guaranty the succession in the female line; and she conceived the most sanguine hopes of being able to raise her husband, Francis, great duke of Tuscany, to the Imperial throne, so long possessed by her ancestors. But the calm and sunshine which ushered in the new reign, were soon overclouded. The king of Prussia revived an antiquated claim to part of Silesia, and asserted his pretensions, by leading an army, in the depth of winter, into that duchy. He was favourably received by the protestants, who formed two thirds of the natives, successively occupied Breslaw, the capital, and several other towns, without the smallest resistance, and defeated, at Molwitz, an Austrian army, composed chiefly of veterans, under the command of marshal Neuperg. The British cabinet, knowing the defenceless state of the Austrian dominions, solicited Maria-Theresa to purchase the friendship of Frederick, by acceding to his demands, and by sacrificing a small part of her territories, to secure the remainder. The queen of Hungary, however, peremptorily rejected all proposals of accommodation, and appealed to Great Britain for the succours stipulated by the treaty which guarantied the Pragmatic Sanction. The successful irruption of Prussia, brought forward numerous claimants to

parts of the Austrian succession. The electors of Bavaria and Saxony, the kings of Spain and Sardinia, all secretly abetted or openly aided by France, evinced a disposition to join Frederick in hostilities against the house of Austria.

CHAPTER 55.

1740—1741.

Meeting of Parliament—Address—Views of Opposition—Motion for the Removal of Sir Robert Walpole—Speech of Sandys—Conduct of the Tories—Shippen withdraws.

IN these critical circumstances, both at home and abroad, the last session of this parliament assembled on the 18th of November, 1740. The king, in his speech from the throne, said, "I acquainted you, at the close of the last session, that I was making preparations for carrying on the just and necessary war in which I am engaged, in the most proper places, and in the most vigorous and effectual manner. For this purpose strong squadrons were got ready, and ordered to sail upon important services, both in the West Indies and Europe, with as much expedition as the nature of those services and the manning of the ships would admit. A very considerable body of land forces was embarked, which is to be joined by a great number of my subjects raised in America; and all things necessary for transporting the troops, and carrying on the designed expedition, were a long time in readiness, and waited only for an opportunity to pursue the intended voyage.

"The several incidents which have happened in the mean time have had no effect upon me, but to confirm me in my resolutions, and determine me to add strength to my armaments, rather than divert or deter me from those just and vigorous methods which I am pursuing, for maintaining the honour of my crown, and the undoubted rights of my people.

"The court of Spain having already felt some effects of our resentment, began to be sensible that they should be no longer able to defend themselves against the efforts of the British nation. And if any other power, agreeably to some late extraordinary proceedings, should interpose, and attempt to prescribe or limit the operations of the war against my declared enemies, the honour and interest of my crown and kingdoms must call upon us to lose no time in putting ourselves into such a condition, as may enable us to repel any insults, and to frustrate any designs formed against us, in violation of the faith of treaties. And I hope any such unprecedented steps, under what colour or pretence soever they may be taken, will inspire my allies with a true sense of the common danger, and will unite us in the support and defence of the common cause.

"The great and unhappy event of the death of the late Emperor, opens a new scene in the affairs of Europe, in which all the principal powers may be immediately or consequentially concerned. It is impossible to determine what turn the policy, interest, or ambition, of the

several courts, may lead them to take in this critical conjuncture. It shall be my care strictly to observe, and attend to their motions, and adhere to the engagements I am under, in order to the maintaining of the balance of power, and the liberties of Europe, and in concert with such powers as are under the same obligations, or equally concerned to preserve the public safety and tranquillity, and to act such a part, as may best contribute to avert the imminent dangers that may threaten them." *

He then, in the usual language, demanded the necessary supplies, recommended the parliament to prohibit the exportation of corn, which the great scarcity rendered necessary, and concluded by exhorting them to make provision for removing the difficulties which obstructed the manning of the fleet. In the house of commons, when an address was moved, testifying the gratitude and affection of the house, and their resolution to support the king in the vigorous prosecution of the war; the opposition proposed to insert the words, 'to make a due examination into the application of the supplies given the last session of parliament.' But the insertion of these words, which were intended to intimate a diffidence of administration, was negatived by 226 against 159, and the original address was carried.†

The great scene of political altercation during this session was the house of peers, where the duke of Argyle, in particular, made a conspi-

* Journals. † Ibid.

cuous figure on the side of opposition. The king was no sooner withdrawn, and the speech read by the lord chancellor, than the duke of Argyle suddenly rose, before any of the ministerial peers could make the customary motion, and proposed an address, to assure the king that the house would support him with their lives and fortunes in prosecution of the just and necessary war in which he was engaged. After stating that the ancient mode of drawing up the address was short and general, reprobating the modern custom of echoing back the speech from the throne, paragraph by paragraph, and expressing approbation of every measure referred to in the speech; he with great animation, and with no less acrimony, arraigned the mode of conducting the war, in which he declared that no one right step had been taken, either in the commencement or prosecution. He particularly blamed the miscarriage of the expedition against Ferrol, and even insinuated that secret orders had been given by ministers against making any attempt on the coast of Spain, and that the sailing of the grand fleet, which had been delayed, was the effect of the king's presence. He mentioned the culpable neglect, and more than neglect, in not sending supplies to admiral Vernon. He severely reprobated the speech, which he considered as the speech of the minister, for not naming the power who might attempt to limit or prescribe the operations of the war. He concluded by proposing to revive the ancient method of addressing, simply to "congratulate his

majesty on his safe return to his regal dominions: To assure his majesty that they would stand by him with their lives and fortunes, in the prosecution of the war; and as a further proof of their duty and affection to his majesty's sacred person, royal family, and government, to declare that they would exert themselves in their high capacity of hereditary great council of the crown, (to which all other councils were subordinate and accountable) in such manner as might best tend to promote the true interest of his majesty and the country in the present juncture." Lord Bathurst seconded the motion.

This address was opposed by lord Haversham, who moved another. The previous question being called for by the duke of Newcastle, the duke of Argyle's motion was negatived by 66 against 38; and the address, according to the ordinary form, which was proposed by lord Haversham, passed without a division; but a violent protest was signed by two-and-twenty peers.*

The great aim of opposition in this memorable session was, to increase the unpopularity of the minister, by inveighing against his misconduct in the prosecution of the war, by imputing to him all the miscarriages and ill success to him, by harassing him with repeated motions and questions relative to the production of papers and letters, and to the prosecution of the war, which might tend either to criminate him if granted, or if denied, might throw an odium on

* Lords' Debates, vol. 7. p. 418.

his mysteriousness and uncandid reserve. In the house of lords, in particular, various letters and copies of instructions were moved for, and refused only by small majorities; others were carried, which ought to have been denied, owing to the feeble resistance of some members of the cabinet.

At this period the opposition were disunited amongst themselves, and could not be brought to form a consistent party, moving regularly towards one great object; but thinking themselves secure of success, they began already to quarrel about the spoils. The Tories jealous of the Whigs, complained, that though far inferior in number, they assumed a consequence and superiority to which they were not entitled. They suspected that several of them had already begun to tamper with the party in the cabinet, which was known to be adverse to the minister. The death of Sir William Wyndham dissolved the ties which had kept the Tories in union with the Whigs, and enfeebled both parties by a want of mutual confidence. From these causes the debates in the house of commons were not conducted with the usual energy. But as the peers in opposition were more closely united, and less distracted with jealousies, their efforts were more vigorous and concentrated, and their motions led to the personal attack on the minister, which distinguished this memorable session. To prepare the public mind, they entered into long and frequent protests, which, during the interruption given to the publication of debates,

conveyed their sentiments unanswered to the world.

Their motions and publications formed a prelude to the grand attack. On the 11th of February, Sandys, who is justly called, by Smollett "the motion-maker," left his seat, and crossing the floor to the minister, said, he thought it an act of common attention to inform him, that he should on Friday next, bring an accusation of several articles against him. Walpole thanked him for the information. Soon afterwards Sandys stood in his place, and acquainted the house, that he intended on the ensuing Friday to open a matter of great importance, which personally concerned the chancellor of the exchequer, and therefore hoped that he would on that day be present.

The minister immediately rose, received the intimation with great composure and dignity, and thanked him for his notice; and after requesting a candid and impartial hearing, declared, that he would not fail to attend the house, as he was not conscious of any crime to deserve accusation. He laid his hand on his breast, and said, with some emotion,

"Nil conscire sibi, nulli pallescere culpæ."

Pulteney observed, that the right honourable gentleman's logic and Latin were equally inaccurate, and declared that he had misquoted Horace, who had written *nullâ pallescere culpâ*. The minister defended his quotation, and Pul-

teney repeating his assertion, he offered a wager of a guinea. Pulteney accepted the challenge, and referred the decision of the dispute to the minister's friend Nicholas Hardinge, clerk of the house, a man distinguished for classical erudition. Hardinge deciding against Walpole, the guinea was immediately thrown to Pulteney, who caught it, and holding it up to the house, exclaimed, "It is the only money which I have received from the treasury for many years, and it shall be the last."*

The public expectations were raised to the utmost pitch, the passages to the gallery were crowded at a very early hour, the concourse was prodigious. Several of the commons secured their seats at six in the morning, and no less than 450 members attended on this important occasion. The debate was opened at one o'clock, on the 13th of February.

Sandys† began by observing, that among the many advantages arising from our happy constitution, there was one reciprocal to the king and people. The legal and regular method by which the people might lay their grievances, complaints, and opinions, before their sovereign, not

* Anecdote communicated by George Hardinge, esq.; son of Nicholas Hardinge—Account by Sir Robert Walpole.—Etough's Papers.—Correspondence.—Tindal, vol. 20. p. 486.—Chandler, 1740-1, p. 63. This guinea was carefully preserved by Mr. Pulteney, and is now in the possession of Sir William Pulteney, bart.

† The substance of this speech is taken from an abstract made by Mr. Fox.—Correspondence.—From parliamentary Memorandums by Sir Robert Walpole.—Orford Papers.—Chandler.

only with regard to the measures which he pursues, but also with regard to the persons whom he employs.

"In absolute monarchies," he said, "the people may suffer, but cannot publicly complain; and this want of communication is productive of the most dreadful calamities both to the prince and people. For as the monarch has no means of becoming acquainted with the public opinion, he often continues to pursue the same measures, and to employ the same men, until the discontents become universal; a general insurrection takes place, and both he and his ministers are involved in one common ruin. In this kingdom such a misfortune can never happen, as long as parliaments assemble regularly and freely. For if discontents arise, when any of the measures pursued by the king's servants are injurious, and his ministers unpopular, it is the duty of this house to give proper information and advice; and if we neglect to do so, we betray not only our duty to our country and constitution, but our duty to our sovereign. This being my opinion, and the opinion of every person who entertains true notions of our constitution, I can no longer defer making the motion of which I formerly gave notice.

"There is not a member of this house who is not sensible that both our foreign and domestic affairs, for several years past, have been unsatisfactory to the majority of the nation. The people have suffered from past measures; they complain of present measures; they expect no

redress, no alteration or amendment but from the interference of this house. These are the sentiments of the people; which ought to be represented to the king, in the proper method established by the constitution.

"I have long expected, that such a motion as I am now to make would have been brought forward by some other gentleman, more capable than myself to enforce what I shall propose. But as no one has hitherto attempted it, and as this is the last session of this parliament, I am unwilling it should expire without answering the people's expectations, which, in this respect, are so just, so well founded, and so agreeable to the constitution. I therefore hope I shall be excused for attempting what I think my duty as a member of this house, and as a friend to the present happy establishment."

He then lamented the miserable condition of the nation; engaged in a war with one potentate, and likely to be involved in another, without one ally abroad, and under the pressure of an immense debt at home. He said that he would inquire by what means we were reduced to this situation, and would then conclude with his intended motion.

In making this inquiry into the causes of our unfortunate condition, he should first begin by considering foreign affairs, then advert to domestic affairs, and lastly enter into the conduct of the war.

In regard to foreign affairs, we had departed from the principles of the grand alliance, which

tended to depress our inveterate enemy the house of Bourbon, and had abandoned and lost our old and natural ally the house of Austria.

Although it had been frequently asserted, that all the misfortunes of our foreign negotiations were principally owing to the peace of Utrecht; yet he was of another opinion. The evils of the peace had been repaired by the quadruple alliance, and still more by the glorious victory which admiral Byng had gained over the Spanish fleet, off the coast of Sicily; a victory, however, which served no other purpose than to give rise to the scandalous treaty of peace in 1721, a treaty highly dishonourable to the nation, because it contained a promise to restore the ships we had taken, in an open and just war, and began with a negotiation, if not an engagement, to cede Gibraltar and Minorca, without stipulating any condition for the advantage of this country, or obtaining an explanation of those treaties, which even then began to be misrepresented on the part of Spain. In one word, this treaty re-established the preponderance of the house of Bourbon.

He could declare, from the highest authority, that even since that time we had been, with respect to foreign powers, in a most desirable situation. The high authority to which he alluded was the speech from the throne, in November 1724, which represented "peace with all powers abroad, at home perfect tranquillity, plenty, and an uninterrupted enjoyment of all civil and religious rights;" expressions which charmed every

English ear. But that universal happiness did not long continue. For soon after this period we entered into "that close friendship and correspondence with the court of France, which, to the infinite disadvantage of this nation, has continued ever since, and which has now, at last, brought the balance of power into the utmost danger, if not to inevitable ruin." We declined availing ourselves of the fortunate breach which had taken place between the two branches of the house of Bourbon; we declined taking advantage of the resentment entertained by Philip against France, for the return of the Spanish infanta; we declined the offer of the king of Spain to submit to the sole mediation of England, for settling the disputes between him and the Emperor.

"But the most pernicious of all the pernicious measures was the treaty of Hanover. When the alliance between Spain and the Emperor was concluded, we, by a very little dexterity, might then have duped France, who has duped us so often. Instead of doing so, we flung ourselves into her arms, and the affairs of England seem, ever since, to have been managed by a French interest. Fleets had been sent, one to the Baltic, another to the West Indies, to insult, and only to insult, the Czar and the king of Spain. The three pretended articles of the Vienna treaty, which produced that of Hanover, were the establishment of the Ostend company, the siege of Gibraltar, and the placing of the Pretender on the throne. But when Gibraltar was besieged,

what assistance did we receive from France?" He was inclined to believe, that no help was so much as demanded from the French, because we knew none would be granted. The reparation of Dunkirk was a memorable instance of French sincerity.

He then adverted to the preliminaries of the peace of 1727, and the act of the Pardo. He stated, that on the first complaints made by the merchants, of Spanish depredations, the parliament thought fit to recommend pacific measures only. He censured the treaty of Seville, by which Spanish troops were to be introduced into Italy. Don Carlos went thither, but we gained nothing; commissioners only were appointed, and when the parliament, in 1732, addressed to know what progress they had made, his majesty's answer was, that they were to meet in four months. But by the delays of Spain, the conferences were not opened till 1734, a strong proof of Spanish perfidy; yet we had introduced the Spanish troops, according to our treaty with the Emperor and States General in 1731. We then guarantied the Pragmatic Sanction, and engaged to support the Emperor in all his dominions; but saw him lose Sicily and Naples, suffered France to gain Loraine, and the power of the house of Austria, which had been ridiculously magnified in order to vindicate the Hanoverian treaty, was pulled down and brought to its present low and miserable situation.

"That great man, admiral Vernon, saw this error, and gave frequent admonitions against the

perfidy of France, in this very house, for which reason it was contrived, that he should be excluded from the next parliament, and he was likewise denied his rank. Then came the second complaint of depredations, when, by the management of one person, parliament was prevailed upon to be again pacific."

He then expatiated on the convention. He repeated most of the objections made to that treaty, which he called one of those expedients, on which the minister seemed to live from year to year; and when this treaty was shamefully broken by Spain, war was not declared, but an order issued at first for reprisals only. Negotiations, as he believed, still went on, but soon after followed the present war.

He next adverted to domestic affairs. After stating the national debt in 1716, he alleged that the debts of the army had been swelled from £.400,000 to above two millions, and debentures issued for that sum, of which part had been discharged from the produce of the sinking fund, by which one person had gained considerable advantage.

To make and unmake, he urged, the famous bank contract, to secure from condign punishment those, who by their wicked and avaricious execution of the trust reposed in them by the South Sea scheme, had ruined many thousands; to commute public justice, and subject the less guilty to a punishment too severe, that the most heinous offenders might escape that which they deserved; and to give up to the South Sea com-

pany the sum of seven millions sterling, which they had obliged themselves to pay to the public, a great part of which sum was given to old stock holders, and consequently to those who had never suffered by the scheme; were the steps by which dishonest power was obtained. All the evils and none of the advantages of the French Mississippi scheme were adopted. Our South Sea scheme had *done us harm*, while their's had liquidated their debts.

He stated the debts and the produce of the sinking fund in 1727, and asserted, that the national debt was not diminished, although the sinking fund had since that period produced no less than fifteen millions, all which had been spent in Spithead expeditions, and Hyde Park reviews.

He enumerated many instances of unconstitutional conduct. A larger standing army maintained than was necessary or consistent with the constitution; and augmented without cause. Squadrons fitted out at an enormous expense, to the great annoyance of trade, without being employed against enemies, or for the assistance of allies. All methods to secure the constitution against that most dangerous enemy, corruption, rejected or rendered ineffectual; many penal laws passed of an arbitrary tendency; public expenditure increased by the addition of new and useless offices; all inquiries into the management of public money perverted or defeated; votes of credit frequent; expenses of the civil list increased; the abolition of burthen-

some and pernicious taxes, and the discharge of the debt prevented, from a principle that the collection of taxes rendered a great number of placemen and officers necessary, whose votes gave weight to undue influence in elections and in parliament; the reduction of interest opposed, not by the influence of argument, but by another sort of influence; officers dismissed for voting against the excise scheme, one of the weakest or most violent projects ever proposed or countenanced by any minister. These, he observed, were the characteristic features of a corrupt and profligate administration.

He then entered on the conduct of the war. Vernon, who after having been excluded from his seat in parliament, and deprived of his rank, for opposing administration, had retired to the country, was the only person fit or willing to conduct the expedition to America; and yet even with these claims, he was not restored to his rank; though it was to be hoped that his meritorious services would extort that mark of confidence. Vernon received on his departure the fairest promises of being supported and supplied. How were these promises fulfilled? He sailed from Plymouth on the 3rd of August 1739, with letters of reprisal only, war not being declared till October, by which means his exertions were fettered and restrained. He sailed with a fleet badly equipped, and badly supplied. In September, some bomb vessels were sent to him, which did not arrive at Jamaica till the 15th of January. No provisions or stores were

forwarded, and so scantily was he victualled, that on the 18th of March, he wrote to government, earnestly pressing for more supplies. He said, that his letters on the table sufficiently proved these facts; they displayed his opinion of the great things which he might have effected, had the number of land forces, which he earnestly and repeatedly called for, been granted, forces which remained at home, for no other use but to oppress the people; forces which should not have been raised, or should have been sent out to vindicate the honour of their country, against their oppressors in America, where alone offensive measures could be carried on with effect. Admiral Haddock, he urged, was equally neglected; bitter complaints for want of supplies came no less from his squadron, and he was forced to act upon the defensive. To that want, he solely attributed the escape of the Cadiz and Ferrol squadrons. He commended, in high terms, the care and diligence of admiral Haddock, in furnishing convoys, and protecting the trade of the Mediterranean; he animadverted with equal acrimony on the culpable neglect of convoys at home, and the numerous cruisers of the enemy, which infested the Channel, and ruined our commerce.

Things being thus, he should now name the author of all these public calamities. After what he had said, he believed no one could mistake the person to whom he alluded! Every one must be convinced that he meant the right honourable gentleman who sat opposite to him,

and the whole house might see that the right honourable gentleman took it to himself; that against him there was as general a discontent as had ever arisen against any minister. Although this discontent had lasted so long, yet the right honourable gentleman still continued in his post, in opposition to the sense of the country. This was no sign of the freedom of government, because a free people neither will nor can be governed, by a minister whom they hate or despise.

He had well considered the difficulty of personal attacks, yet he should obey the voice of the people, and act like an honest man, and like an Englishman, in making his motion. He himself, merely a private man, protected only by his innocence, would fearlessly enter the lists against one who usurped regal power, who had arrogated to himself a place of French extraction, that of sole minister; contrary to the nature and principles of the English constitution. He was well aware, that a common excuse would be urged in his defence, that parliament had given a sanction to many of the acts which he had enumerated. But the right honourable gentleman could not urge this exculpation, without subjecting himself to the charge of gross inconsistency. He himself had accused the earl of Oxford of departing from the principles of the grand alliance, and of having sacrificed the country to France, although all his measures had been sanctioned by parliament. He observed likewise, that parliaments were not infallible,

but resembled other courts of justice. They judge from information, and if convinced that they had been misled by false information, should equally acknowledge their error, and alter their opinions.

"If it should be asked," he said, "Why I impute all these evils to *one person*, I reply, because that one person grasped in his own hands every branch of government; that *one person* has attained the sole direction of affairs, monopolised all the favours of the crown, compassed the disposal of all places, pensions, titles, ribbands, as well as all preferments, civil, military, and ecclesiastical; that *one person* made a blind submission to his will, both in elections and parliament, the only terms of present favour, and future expectation, as well as continuance in office; and declared, in this very house, that he must be a pitiful minister who did not displace an officer that had opposed his measures in parliament.

"But even let us suppose no oversight, error, or crime in his public conduct, and that the people were satisfied with his administration, the very length of it is in itself a sufficient cause for removing him. In a free government too long possession of power is highly dangerous. Most commonwealths have been overturned by this very oversight; and in this country, we know how difficult it has often proved for parliament to draw an old favourite from behind the throne, even when he has been guilty of the most heinous crimes. I wish this may not

be our case at present; for though I will not say, nor have I at present any occasion for showing, that the favourite I am now complaining of has been guilty of any crimes, the proof may then be produced, and the witnesses against him will not be afraid to appear. Till you do this, it is impossible to determine, whether he is guilty or innocent; and considering the universal clamour against him, it is high time to reduce him to such a condition, that he may be brought to a fair, an impartial, and a strict account. As I am only to propose an address to remove him from the king's counsels, I have no occasion to accuse him of any specific crime. The dissatisfaction of the people, and their suspicion of his conduct, are a sufficient foundation for such an address, and a sufficient cause for his removal. For no sovereign of these kingdoms ought to employ any minister who is disagreeable to the people, and when any minister is become unpopular, it is our duty to inform the king, that he may give general satisfaction by his removal. I solemnly declare that I have no resentment against the right honourable gentleman; I have, on the contrary, received personal civilities from him, and have no private motives to wish him ill. But as I think it necessary, for the welfare of my country, that he should no longer continue in his majesty's counsels, who has bewildered himself in treaties, who has forfeited his word with every court in Europe, and against whom the voice of the world, is in unison with that of his

country, I therefore move, That an humble address be presented to his majesty, that he would be graciously pleased to remove the right honourable Sir Robert Walpole, knight of the most noble order of the garter, first commissioner, chancellor, and under treasurer of the exchequer, and one of his majesty's most honourable privy council, from his majesty's presence and counsels for ever."

The motion was seconded by lord Limerick, who observed, that the nation was reduced to so low a state by the misconduct of the minister, that no resource was left, except the increase of the land tax, and the anticipation of the funds. That the reins of government were conducted by a sole minister, who lived by expedients, who had removed the best and ablest men in the army, for no other demerit than for their parliamentary opposition to his measures.

Wortley Montague then proposed, in conformity to the order of the house, which requires that every member, against whom an accusation is brought, should retire, while his conduct is examined, that Sir Robert Walpole should be ordered to withdraw. He was seconded by Gybbon, who attempted to vindicate this unjust proposal, by several inapplicable precedents.

The motion was warmly opposed by Bromley and Howe; and as the house appeared to favour that side of the question, Gybbon, after urging, that if the motion for the removal should be carried, neither the life, liberty nor estate of the minister would be affected by the decision,

proposed that he should be heard in his own defence, and then withdraw. This proposal was strenuously supported, and no less strenuously resisted. It was called an unprecedented mode of proceeding, to charge a member in general terms, by speeches only, without stating particular facts as crimes, or bringing any evidence to prove them, or him to be the author of them; and then to expect that he should retire, and other members be permitted to load him with general accusations, while he was not present, to hear and make his defence. The house appearing convinced of the absurdity and injustice of this proposal, it was withdrawn, and resolved that the minister should hear all the charges brought against him, and should be the last to reply.

A long and violent debate then took place on the main question. The principal speakers in favour of the motion were Pulteney, Bootle, Fazakerly, Pitt, and Lyttleton.

The substance of their arguments was similar to those which had been advanced by Sandys. No direct accusation was made; no specific charge urged; no particular crime alleged, but a species of accumulative guilt, drawn from a long series of supposed misconduct, and founded on, what they called, moral certainty, presumptive evidence, probable proof, common fame, and notoriety of facts.

They justified their proceedings by making a distinction between impeachments, or bills of pains and penalties, which affect the lives,

liberty, or estates of the persons accused, and an address to remove a minister only, without attempting to inflict any legislative or judicial punishment. In the first case, they observed, legal evidence is necessary, and must be applied to the several heads of the accusation; but in the other, strong presumptions, founded upon public fame and notoriety, have been always held sufficient.

Pitt observed, in his emphatic language: "During the administration that is the object of censure, at home debts are increased, taxes multiplied, and the sinking fund alienated; abroad the system of Europe is totally subverted, and at this awful moment, when the greatest scene was opening to Europe that had ever before occurred, he who has lost the confidence of all mankind, ought not to be permitted to continue at the head of the king's government."*

Pulteney enforced the general tenor of the argument advanced by Sandys, with increased animation, wit, and eloquence. He particularly dwelt on his favourite topic, that the system adopted, and invariably pursued by the minister, tended to exalt the house of Bourbon, and depress that of Austria; he maintained his position by an analysis of foreign transactions and treaties, preceding and following the treaty of Hanover, which he considered as the source of all subsequent degradations, and the cause of national disgrace.

* Heads of Pitt's speech, in Sir Robert Walpole's Parliamentary Memorandums.

References were not only made to those ministers who had been impeached or censured by the house of commons, to Suffolk, Clarendon, and Lauderdale; but Walpole was compared to the most worthless favourites that had ever engrossed the ear of former sovereigns. Allusions were even made to the minions of Edward the Second, Pierce Gaveston,* and Hugh Le Despenser, and he was accused of resembling them in the giddiness of their power, and the exorbitance of their grants.

The motion was opposed, with great animation and ability, by the friends of the minister. Pelham and Stephen Fox principally distinguished themselves in this debate. After vindicating the measures, both foreign and domestic, which had been so bitterly arraigned, they rested the chief part of the defence on the impropriety of the motion. They exposed the violence and injustice of proposing to have a

* About this time was published, "The Life and Death of Pierce Gaveston, Earl of Cornwal, grand Favourite and Prime Minister to that unfortunate Prince, Edward the Second, King of England, with Political Remarks, by Way of Caution to all crowned Heads, and Evil Ministers." It was accompanied with a caricature print, representing the figure of Sir Robert Walpole, holding in his hands a label, inscribed *Corruption*. Before him is the block, and the executioner with the axe. Behind him is a grenadier with a bag of money in his hand, on which is written *pay*; a hand in the clouds holds a sword over his head. Underneath is a vignette, with a baboon in chains on one side, and on the other a hydra pierced with darts, inclosing this inscription:

"Tho' evil ministers awhile,
"May bask themselves in fortune's smile;
"They for their crimes must soon or late,
"Like Gaveston, submit to fate."

member of the house, and a person in his high station, punished by the loss of character and reputation, upon general allegations, which were not proved to be crimes, and which had received, in former examinations and debates, the approbation or consent of the parliament; and in making Sir Robert Walpole an adviser of the things alleged, as prime or sole minister, without any other evidence than that of common fame.*

The assertion of Sir Charles Wager made a great impression on the house. With a view to combat the arguments that Walpole was sole minister, the veteran seaman, who had been at the head of the admiralty nine years, said, "That, to his knowledge, Sir Robert Walpole was as forward and zealous to promote the war as any of his majesty's council, and that nothing was a moment wanted in his province, that of issuing money. That he had never interfered in recommending any one person to the admiralty board; and if he had ever done so, he (Sir Charles) would have thrown up all his employments."

The minister was not only defended by his friends and those who usually supported the measures of government; but the motion was opposed by several Tories, as tending to introduce an inquisitorial system.

Lord Cornbury, in particular, observed, "The advocates for the motion, endeavour to advance

* Account of the debate by Sir Robert Walpole. Correspondence.

a charge of *accumulative* guilt, to aggravate one crime by the superaddition of another, and rather to intend a popular censure, than a legal condemnation.

"I suppose no man will suspect that an unjust partiality in favour of the gentleman, whose conduct is now the subject of examination, influences me to censure this mode of proceeding; since no man can want reasons against it of the greatest weight: reasons which deserve the closest attention from every man of prudence and virtue, every man who regards his own safety, or the happiness of future generations. No man, whose judgment is not overborne by his resentment, and whose ardour for vengeance has not extinguished every other motive of action, can resolve to give the sanction of his voice to a method of prosecution, by which the good and bad are equally endangered; and which will make the administration of public affairs destructive to the purest integrity, and the highest wisdom.

"That such must be the consequence of charges like this, will appear no longer a paradoxical assertion, if it be remembered, that humanity is a state of imperfection, that the strickest virtue sometimes declines from the right, and that the most consummate policy is by false appearances, or accidental inattention, betrayed into error. For how soon must that man be destroyed, whose high station exposes him to the continual observation of envy and malevolence, whose minutest errors are care-

fully remarked, and whose casual failings are treasured up as a fund of accusations. How soon, if trivial transgressions shall be accumulated into capital crimes, may the best man complete the sum of his offences, and be doomed to ignominy, to exile, or to death!

"In criminal proceedings, particular regard has been had to precedents, and surely the effects of a former accusation of this kind, give us no encouragement for the repetition of it. From a charge of accumulative treason, the faction of the last age proceeded to the usurpation of boundless authority, the subversion of our constitution, and the murder of the king.

"I shall therefore continue to suppose every man innocent till he appears from legal evidence to be guilty; and to reject any charge of accumulative guilt, upon the same principles of regard to liberty, to virtue, to truth, and to our constitution, by which I have hitherto regulated my conduct; and for the same reasons for which I have condemned the measures of the administration, I shall now oppose the present motion."*

Edward Harley, member for Herefordshire, nephew to the lord treasurer, and in a short time afterwards earl of Oxford himself, evinced, on this occasion, a spirit of moderation, not usual with persons engaged in party disputes. He was one of the heads of the Tory interest, and his family had always distinguished itself

* Chandler.

in opposition to Sir Robert Walpole. He said, "Sir, I do not stand up at this time of night, either to accuse or flatter any man. Since I have had the honour to sit in parliament, I have opposed the measures of administration because I thought them wrong; and as long as they are, I shall continue to give as constant an opposition to them. The state of the nation, by the conduct of our minister, is deplorable; a war is destroying us abroad, and poverty and corruption are devouring us at home. But whatever I may think of men, God forbid, that my private opinion should be the only rule of my judgment! I should desire to have an exterior conviction from facts and evidence, and without this, I am so far from condemning, that I would not censure any man. I am fully satisfied in my own mind, that there are those who give pernicious and destructive counsels; and, I hope, a time will come, when a proper, legal, parliamentary inquiry may be made, and when clear facts and full evidence will plainly discover who are the enemies of their country. A noble lord, to whom I had the honour to be related, has been often mentioned in this debate. He was impeached and imprisoned; by that imprisonment his years were shortened; and the prosecution was carried on by the honourable person, who is now the subject of your question, though he knew at that very time, that it was unsupported by evidence. I am now, Sir, glad of this opportunity to return

good for evil, and to do that honourable gentleman and his family, that justice which he denied to mine."*

Shippen declared,† "that he looked on this motion as only a scheme for turning out one minister, and bringing in another; that as his conduct in parliament had always been regulated with a view to the good of his country, without any regard to his own private interest, it was quite indifferent to him, who was in or who was out; and he would give himself no concern in the question." At the conclusion of these words he withdrew, and was followed by thirty-four of his friends.

* Chandler.—Tindal has recorded this speech, as spoken in the house of lords by the earl of Oxford, which was certainly spoken by his uncle in the house of commons. By the death of his cousin, in the following June, he succeeded to the title.

† Chandler.

CHAPTER 56.

1741.

Reply of Sir Robert Walpole—Motion negatived—Similar Motion in the Lords—Conduct and Anecdotes of Shippen.

THIS attack concerted with so much previous care, and announced with so much ostentation, was not calculated to alarm the minister. He saw the disaffected Whigs feeble and hesitating; all the Tories, not excepting those who voted against him, averse to the question; many supporting him with a favourable display of impartiality and benevolence; the Jacobites scornfully turning their backs, upon a party apparently united by no principle, and a motion brought forwards without due consideration. He availed himself, with great ability, of the vantage ground on which he stood, and commenced the reply by a well conducted attack against the discordant parts of opposition. He fomented the division between the Tories and Whigs in opposition, paid a delicate compliment to the Tories, and directed the shafts of his eloquence principally against the leaders of the disaffected Whigs, whose motives of hostility were already suspected by the public.

He said, "Sir,* it has been observed by several gentlemen, in vindication of this motion, that if it should be carried, neither my life, liberty, nor estate will be affected. But do the honourable gentlemen consider my character and reputation as of no moment? Is it no imputation to be arraigned before this house, in which I have sat forty years, and to have my name transmitted to posterity with disgrace and infamy? I will not conceal my sentiments, that to be named in parliament as a subject of inquiry, is to me a matter of great concern. But I have the satisfaction at the same time to reflect, that the impression to be made depends upon the consistency of the charge, and the motives of the prosecutors. Had the charge been reduced to specific allegations, I should have felt myself called upon for a specific defence. Had I served a weak or wicked master, and implicitly obeyed his dictates, obedience to his commands must have been my only justification. But as it has been my good fortune to serve a master, who wants no bad ministers, and would have hearkened to none, my defence must rest on my own conduct. The consciousness of innocence is also sufficient support against my present prosecutors. A farther justification is also derived from considering the views and abilities of the prosecutors. Had I been guilty of great enormities, they want neither zeal and

* The substance of this speech is principally taken from parliamentary minutes, in the hand writing of Sir Robert Walpole.—Orford Papers.

inclination to bring them forwards, nor ability to place them in the most prominent point of view. But as I am conscious of no crime, my own experience convinces me, that none can be justly imputed, I must therefore ask the gentlemen, whence does this attack proceed? From the passions and prejudices of the parties combined against me; who may be divided into three classes, the Boys, the riper Patriots, and the Tories. The Tories I can easily forgive, they have unwillingly come into the measure, and they do me honour in thinking it necessary to remove me, as their only obstacle. What is the inference to be drawn from these premises? that demerit with them ought to be considered as merit with others. But my great and principal crime is, my long continuance in office, or, in other words, the long exclusion of those who now complain against me. This is the heinous offence which exceeds all others. I keep from them the possession of that power, those honours, and those emoluments, to which they so ardently and pertinaciously aspire. I will not attempt to deny the reasonableness and necessity of a party war; but in carrying on that war, all principles and rules of justice should not be departed from. The Tories must confess, that the most obnoxious persons have felt few instances of extra judicial power. Wherever they have been arraigned, a plain charge has been exhibited against them; they have had an impartial trial, and have been permitted to make their defence. And will they, who have experienced this fair

and equitable mode of proceeding, act in direct opposition to every principle of justice, and establish this fatal precedent of parliamentary inquisition? and whom would they conciliate by a conduct so contrary to principle and precedent?

"Can it be fitting in them, who have divided the public opinion of the nation, to share it with those who now appear as their competitors? With the men of yesterday, the boys in politics, who would be absolutely contemptible did not their audacity render them detestable? With the mock patriots, whose practice and professions prove their selfishness and malignity, who threatened to pursue me to destruction, and who have never for a moment lost sight of their object? These men, under the name of the Separatists, presume to call themselves, exclusively, the *nation* and the *people*, and under that character, assume all power. In their estimation, the king, lords, and commons, are a faction, and *they* are the government. Upon these principles, they threaten the destruction of all authority, and think they have a right to judge, direct, and resist, all legal magistrates. They withdraw from parliament because they succeed in nothing, and then attribute their want of success not to the true cause, their own want of integrity and importance, but to the effect of places, pensions, and corruption. May it not be asked, Are the people on the court side more united than on the other? Are not the Tories, Jacobites, and *Patriots*, equally determined? What makes this strict union? What cements

this heterogeneous mass? Party engagements and personal attachments. However different their views and principles, they all agree in opposition. The Jacobites distress the government they would subvert; the Tories contend for party prevalence and power; the Patriots, from discontent and disappointment, would change the ministry, that themselves might exclusively succeed. They have laboured this point twenty years unsuccessfully; they are impatient of longer delay. They clamour for change of measures, but mean only change of ministers.

"In party contests, why should not both sides be equally steady? Does not a Whig administration as well deserve the support of the Whigs as the contrary? Why is not principle the cement in one as well as the other, especially when they confess, that all is levelled against one man? Why this one man? because they think, vainly, nobody else could withstand them. All others are treated as tools and vassals. The one is the corrupter, the numbers corrupted. But whence this cry of corruption, and exclusive claim of honourable distinction? Compare the estates, characters, and fortunes, of the commons on one side, with those on the other. Let the matter be fairly investigated; survey and examine the individuals who usually support the measures of government, and those who are in opposition. Let us see to whose side the balance preponderates. Look round both houses, and see to which side the balance of

virtue and talents preponderates! Are all these on one side, and not on the other? Or are all these to be counterbalanced by an affected claim to the exclusive title of patriotism. Gentlemen have talked a great deal of patriotism: a venerable word, when duly practised. But I am sorry to say, that of late it has been so much hackneyed about, that it is in danger of falling into disgrace. The very idea of true patriotism is lost, and the term has been prostituted to the very worst of purposes. A patriot, Sir! why patriots spring up like mushrooms? I could raise fifty of them within the four-and-twenty hours. I have raised many of them in one night. It is but refusing to gratify an unreasonable, or an insolent demand, and up starts a patriot. I have never been afraid of making patriots; but I disdain and despise all their efforts; for this pretended virtue proceeds from personal malice, and from disappointed ambition. There is not a man among them whose particular aim I am not able to ascertain, and from what motive they have entered into the lists of opposition.

"I shall now consider the articles of accusation which they have brought against me, but which they have not thought fit to reduce to specific charges; and I shall consider these in the same order as that in which they were placed by the honourable member who made the motion. First, in regard to foreign affairs; secondly, to domestic affairs; and, thirdly, to the conduct of the war.

"As to foreign affairs, I must take notice of the uncandid manner in which the gentlemen on the other side have managed the question, by blending numerous treaties and complicated negotiations into one general mass.

"To form a fair and candid judgment of the subject, it becomes necessary not to consider the treaties merely insulated; but to advert to the time in which they were made, to the circumstances and situation of Europe when they were made, to the peculiar situation in which I stand, and to the power which I possessed. I am called repeatedly and insidiously prime and sole minister. Admitting, however, for the sake of argument, that I am prime and sole minister in this country; am I, therefore, prime and sole minister of all Europe? Am I answerable for the conduct of other countries as well as for that of my own? Many words are not wanting to show, that the particular views of each court occasioned the dangers which affected the public tranquillity; yet the whole is charged to my account. Nor is this sufficient; whatever was the conduct of England, I am equally arraigned. If we maintained ourselves in peace, and took no share in foreign transactions, we are reproached for tameness and pusillanimity. If, on the contrary, we interfered in the disputes, we are called Don Quixotes, and dupes to all the world. If we contracted guaranties, it was asked, why is the nation wantonly burthened? If guaranties were declined, we were reproached with having no allies."

After making these preliminary observations, on the necessity of considering the relative situation of Europe, when these engagements were contracted, and proving that the treaties were right at the time they were made, though they might not have had the desired effect, he entered into a luminous recapitulation of the principal compacts, which had been adverted to in the course of the debate. They formed a connective series, embracing past events, present advantages, and future contingencies, of which the various parts had such a necessary dependance on each other, that any separation must be fatal to the comprehension of the whole.

He took up the subject from the peace of Utrecht, which, by suffering a prince of the house of Bourbon to remain on the throne of Spain, had materially altered the balance of power in Europe, had produced new interests, and involved this country in a series of delicate and complicated negotiations. The quadruple alliance was the consequence of that treaty; but as he was not then in administration, he was not accountable either for its articles or effects, though he was unfortunately minister, and unwillingly accessory to the execution of it.

He should, therefore, begin with the first act of that administration to which he had the honour to belong; a refusal to accept the sole mediation offered by Spain, on the breach between Spain and France, occasioned by the dismission of the infanta. "I hope it will not be said," he observed, "we had any reason to

quarrel with France upon that account; and therefore, if our accepting that mediation might have produced a rupture with France, it was not our duty to interfere, unless we had something very beneficial to expect from the acceptance. A reconciliation between the courts of Vienna and Madrid, it is true, was desirable to all Europe, as well as to us, provided it had been brought about without any design to disturb our tranquillity, or the tranquillity of Europe. But both parties were then so high in their demands, that we could hope for no success; and if the negotiation had ended without effect, we might have expected the common fate of arbitrators, the disobliging of both. Therefore, as it was our interest to keep well with both, I must still think it was the most prudent part we could act, to refuse the offered mediation.

"The next step of our foreign conduct, exposed to reprehension, is the treaty of Hanover. Sir, if I were to give the true history of that treaty, which no gentleman can desire, I should, I am sure I could fully justify my own conduct. But I do not desire to justify my own, without justifying his late majesty's conduct, I must observe, that his late majesty had such information, as convinced not only him, but those of his council, both at home and abroad, that some dangerous designs had been formed between the Emperor and Spain, at the time of their concluding the treaty at Vienna, in May 1725. Designs, Sir, which were dangerous not only to the liberties of this nation, but to the liberties of

Europe. They were not only to wrest Gibraltar and Port Mahon from this nation, and force the Pretender upon us; but they were to have Don Carlos married to the Emperor's eldest daughter, who would thereby have had a probability of uniting in his person, or in the person of some of his successors, the crowns of France and Spain, with the Imperial dignity, and the Austrian dominions. It was therefore highly reasonable, both in France and us, to take the alarm at such designs, and to think betimes of preventing their being carried into execution. But with regard to us, it was more particularly our business to take the alarm, because we were to have been immediately attacked. I shall grant, Sir, it would have been very difficult, if not impossible, for Spain and the Emperor joined together to have invaded, or made themselves masters of any of the British dominions; but will it be said, they might not have invaded the king's dominions in Germany, in order to force him to a compliance with what they desired of him, as king of Great Britain? And if those dominions had been invaded on account of a quarrel with this nation, should we not have been obliged, both in honour and interest to defend them? When we were thus threatened, it was therefore absolutely necessary for us to make an alliance with France; and that we might not trust too much to her assistance, it was likewise necessary to form alliances with the northern powers, and with some of the princes in Germany, which we never did, nor ever could do, without granting

them immediate subsidies. These measures were therefore, I still think, not only prudent but necessary, and by these measures we made it much more dangerous for the Emperor and Spain to attack us.

"But still, Sir, though by these alliances we put ourselves upon an equal footing with our enemies, in case of an attack, yet, to preserve the tranquillity of Europe, as well as our own, there was something else to be done. We knew that war could not be begun and carried on without money; we knew that the Emperor had no money for that purpose, without receiving large remittances from Spain; and we knew that Spain could make no such remittances, without receiving large returns of treasure from the West Indies. The only way, therefore, to render these two powers incapable of disturbing the tranquillity of Europe was, by sending a squadron to the West Indies, to stop the return of the Spanish galleons; and this made it necessary, at the same time, to send a squadron to the Mediterranean, for the security of our valuable possessions in that part of the world. By these measures the Emperor saw the impossibility of attacking us in any part of the world, because Spain could give him no assistance, either in money or troops; and the attack made by the Spaniards upon Gibraltar was so feeble, that we had no occasion to call upon our allies for assistance. A small squadron of our own prevented an attack by sea, and from their assault by land, we had nothing to fear; they

might have knocked their brains out against inaccessible rocks, to this very day, without bringing that fortress into any danger.

"I do not pretend, Sir, to be a great master of foreign affairs. In that post in which I have the honour to serve his majesty, it is not my business to interfere; and as one of his majesty's council, I have but one voice. But if I had been the sole adviser of the treaty of Hanover, and of all the measures which were taken in pursuance of it, from what I have said, I hope it will appear, that I do not deserve to be censured, either as a weak or a wicked minister on that account."

The next measures which incurred censure were the guaranty of the Pragmatic Sanction by the second treaty of Vienna, and the refusal of the cabinet to assist the house of Austria, in conformity with the articles of that guaranty.

"As to the guaranty of the Pragmatic Sanction," he said, "I am really surprised to find that measure objected to; it was so universally approved, both within doors and without, that till this very day, I think no fault was ever found with it, unless it was that of being too long delayed. If it was so necessary for supporting the balance of power in Europe as has been contended in this debate, to preserve intire the dominions of the house of Austria, surely it was not our business to insist upon a partition of them in favour of any prince of the empire. But if we had, could we have expected that the house of Austria would have agreed to any such

partition, even for the acquisition of our guaranty? The king of Prussia had, it is true, a claim upon some lordships in Silesia; but that claim was absolutely denied by the court of Vienna, and was not at that time so strongly urged by the late king of Prussia. Nay, if he had lived till this time, I believe it would not now have been advanced; for he acceded to that guaranty without any reservation of that claim; therefore, I must look upon this as an objection, which has since arisen from an accident, that could not then be foreseen, or provided against.

"I must therefore, think, Sir, that our guaranty of the Pragmatic Sanction, or our manner of doing it, cannot now be objected to, nor any person censured by parliament for advising that measure. In regard to the refusal of the cabinet to assist the house of Austria, though it was prudent and right in us to enter into that guaranty, we were not, therefore, obliged to enter into every broil the house of Austria might afterwards lead themselves into; and therefore, we were not in honour obliged to take any share in the war which the Emperor brought upon himself in 1733, nor were we in interest obliged to take a share in that war, as long as neither side attempted to push their conquests farther than was consistent with the balance of power in Europe, which was a case that did not happen. For the power of the house of Austria was not diminished by the event of that war, because they got Tuscany, Parma, and Placentia, in lieu of Naples and Sicily; nor was the power

of France much increased, because Loraine was a province she had taken and kept possession of, during every war in which she had been engaged.

"As to the disputes with Spain, they had not then reached such a height, as to make it necessary for us to come to an open rupture. We had then reason to hope, that all differences would be accommodated in an amicable manner; and while we have any such hopes, it can never be prudent for us to engage ourselves in war, especially with Spain, where we have always had a very beneficial commerce. These hopes, it is true, Sir, at last proved abortive; but I never heard it was a crime to hope for the best. This sort of hope was the cause of the late convention. If Spain had performed her part of that preliminary treaty, I am sure it would not have been wrong in us, to have hoped for a friendly accommodation, and for that end to have waited nine or ten months longer, in which time the plenipotentiaries were, by the treaty, to have adjusted all the differences subsisting between the two nations. But the failure of Spain in performing what had been settled by this preliminary, put an end to all our hope, and then, and not till then, it became prudent to enter into hostilities, which were commenced as soon as possible after the expiration of the term limited for the payment of the £.95,000.

"Strong and virulent censures have been cast on me, for having commenced the war without a single ally; and this deficiency has been ascribed

to the multifarious treaties in which I have bewildered myself. But although the authors of this imputation are well apprized that all these treaties have been approved by parliament; yet they are now brought forward as crimes, without appealing to the judgment of parliament, and without proving or declaring that all, or any of them were advised by me. A supposed sole minister is to be condemned and punished as the author of all; and what adds to the enormity is, that an attempt was made to convict him uncharged and unheard, without taking into consideration the most arduous crisis which ever occurred in the annals of Europe. Sweden corrupted by France; Denmark tempted and wavering; the landgrave of Hesse Cassel almost gained; the king of Prussia, the Emperor, and the Czarina, with whom alliances had been negotiating, dead; the Austrian dominions claimed by Spain and Bavaria; the elector of Saxony hesitating whether he should accede to the general confederacy, planned by France; the court of Vienna irresolute and indecisive. In this critical juncture, if France enters into engagements with Prussia, if the queen of Hungary hesitates and listens to France, are all or any of these events to be imputed to English counsels? and if to English counsels, why are they to be attributed to one man?

"I now come, Sir, to the second head, the conduct of domestic affairs. And here a most heinous charge is made, that the nation has been burthened with unnecessary expenses, for

the sole purpose of preventing the discharge of our debts, and the abolition of taxes. But this attack is more to the dishonour of the whole cabinet council than to me. If there be any ground for this imputation, it is a charge upon king, lords, and commons, as corrupted, or imposed upon. And they have no proof of these allegations, but affect to substantiate them by common fame and public notoriety.

"No expense has been incurred but what has been approved and provided for by parliament. The public treasure has been duly applied to the uses to which it was appropriated, and regular accounts have been annually laid before parliament, of every article of expense. If by foreign accidents, by the disputes of foreign states amongst themselves, or by their designs against us, the nation has often been put to an extraordinary expense, that expense cannot be said to have been unnecessary; because, if by saving it we had exposed the balance of power to danger, or ourselves to an attack, it would have cost, perhaps, a hundred times that sum, before we could recover from that danger, or repel that attack.

"In all such cases there will be a variety of opinions. I happened to be one of those who thought all these expenses necessary, and I had the good fortune to have the majority of both houses of parliament on my side; but this, it seems, proceeded from bribery and corruption. Sir, if any one instance had been mentioned, if it had been shown, that I ever offered a reward

to any member of either house, or ever threatened to deprive any member of his office or employment, in order to influence his vote in parliament, there might have been some ground for this charge. But when it is so generally laid, I do not know what I can say to it; unless it be to deny it as generally and as positively as it has been asserted; and, thank God! till some proof be offered, I have the laws of the land, as well as the laws of charity, in my favour.

"Some members of both houses have, it is true, been removed from their employments under the crown; but were they ever told, either by me, or by any other of his majesty's servants, that it was for opposing the measures of the administration in parliament? They were removed because his majesty did not think fit to continue them longer in his service. His majesty had a right so to do; and I know no one that has a right to ask him, What dost thou? If his majesty had a mind that the favours of the crown should circulate, would not this of itself be a good reason for removing any of his servants? Would not this reason be approved by the whole nation, except those who happen to be the present possessors? I cannot, therefore, see how this can be imputed as a crime, or how any of the king's ministers can be blamed for doing what the public has no concern in; for if the public be well and faithfully served, it has no business to ask by whom.

"As to the particular charge urged against me, I mean that of the army debentures, I am

surprised, Sir, to hear any thing relating to this affair charged upon me. Whatever blame may attach to this affair, it must be placed to the account of those that were in power, when I was, as they call it, the country gentleman. It was by them this affair was introduced and conducted, and I came in only to pay off those public securities, which their management had reduced to a great discount, and consequently to redeem our public credit from that reproach, which they had brought upon it. The discount at which these army debentures were negotiated, was a strong and prevalent reason with parliament, to apply the sinking fund first to the payment of those debentures; but the sinking fund could not be applied to that purpose, till it began to produce something considerable, which was not till the year 1727. That the sinking fund was then to receive a great addition, was a fact publicly known in 1726; and if some people were sufficiently quick-sighted to foresee, that the parliament would probably appropriate it to this purpose, and cunning enough to make the most of their own foresight, could I help it, or could they be blamed for doing so? But I defy my most inveterate enemy to prove, that I had any hand in bringing these debentures to a discount, or that I had any share in the profits by buying them.

"In reply to those who confidently assert, that the national debt is not decreased since 1727, and that the sinking fund has not been applied to the discharge of the public burthens,

I can with truth declare, that a part of the debt has been paid off, and the landed interest has been very much eased, with respect to that most unequal and grievous burthen, the land tax. I say so, Sir, because upon examination, it will appear, that within these sixteen or seventeen years, no less than £. 8,000,000 of our debt has been actually discharged, by the due application of the sinking fund, and at least £. 7,000,000 has been taken from that fund, and applied to the ease of the land tax. For if it had not been applied to the current service, we must have supplied that service by increasing the land tax; and as the sinking fund was originally designed for paying off our debts, and easing us of our taxes, the application of it in case of the land tax, was certainly as proper and as necessary an use as could be made. And I little thought that giving relief to landed gentlemen, would have been brought against me as a crime.

"I shall now advert to the third topic of accusation, the conduct of the war. I have already stated in what manner, and in what circumstances hostilities commenced; and as I am neither general nor admiral, as I have nothing to do either with our navy or army, I am sure I am not answerable for the prosecution of it. But were I to answer for every thing, no fault could, I think, be found with my conduct in the prosecution of the war. It has from the beginning been carried on with as much vigour, and as great care of our trade, as was consistent with our safety at home, and with our circum-

stances at the beginning of the war. If our attacks upon the enemy were too long delayed, or if they have not been so vigorous or so frequent as they ought to have been, those only are to blame who have for many years been haranguing against standing armies; for without a sufficient number of regular troops, in proportion to the numbers kept up by our neighbours, I am sure we can neither defend ourselves, nor offend our enemies. On the supposed miscarriages of the war, so unfairly stated, and so unjustly imputed to me, I could, with great ease, frame an incontrovertible defence. But as I have trespassed so long on the time of the house, I shall not weaken the effect of that forcible exculpation, so generously and disinterestedly advanced by the right honourable gentleman, who so meritoriously presides at the admiralty.

"If my whole administration is to be scrutinised and arraigned, why are the most favourable parts to be omitted? If facts are to be accumulated on one side, why not on the other? And why may not I be permitted to speak in my *own favour*? Was I not called by the voice of the king and the nation to remedy the fatal effects of the South Sea project, and to support declining credit? Was I not placed at the head of the Treasury, when the revenues were in the greatest confusion? Is credit revived, and does it now flourish? Is it not at an incredible height, and if so, to whom must that circumstance be attributed? Has not tranquil-

lity been preserved both at home and abroad, notwithstanding a most unreasonable and violent opposition? Has the true interest of the nation been pursued, or has trade flourished? Have gentlemen produced one instance of this exorbitant power, of the influence which I extend to all parts of the nation, of the tyranny with which I oppress those who oppose, and the liberality with which I reward those who support me? But having first invested me with a kind of mock dignity, and styled me a prime minister, they impute to me an unpardonable abuse of that chimerical authority, which they only have created and conferred. If they are really persuaded that the army is annually established by me, that I have the sole disposal of posts and honours, that I employ this power in the destruction of liberty, and the diminution of commerce, let me awaken them from their delusion. Let me expose to their view the real condition of the public weal; let me show them that the crown has made no encroachments, that all supplies have been granted by parliament; that all questions have been debated with the same freedom as before the fatal period, in which my counsels are said to have gained the ascendancy: an ascendancy from which they deduce the loss of trade, the approach of slavery, the preponderance of prerogative, and the extension of influence. But I am far from believing that they feel those apprehensions which they so earnestly labour to communicate to others; and I have too high an opinion of

their sagacity not to conclude that, even in their own judgment, they are complaining of grievances, which they do not suffer, and promoting rather their private interest than that of the public.

"What is this unbounded sole power which is imputed to me? How has it discovered itself, or how has it been proved? What have been the effects of the corruption, ambition, and avarice, with which I am so abundantly charged?

"Have I ever been suspected of being corrupted? A strange phænomenon, a corrupter himself not corrupt! Is ambition imputed to me? Why then do I still continue a commoner? I, who refused a white staff and a peerage. I had, indeed, like to have forgotten the little ornament about my shoulders, which gentlemen have so repeatedly mentioned in terms of sarcastic obloquy. But surely, though this may be regarded with envy or indignation in another place, it cannot be supposed to raise any resentment in this house, where many may be pleased to see those honours which their ancestors have worn, restored again to the commons.

"Have I given any symptoms of an avaricious disposition? Have I obtained any grant from the crown since I have been placed at the head of the treasury? Has my conduct been different from that which others in the same station would have followed? Have I acted wrong in giving the place of auditor to my son, and in

providing for my own family? I trust that their advancement will not be imputed to me as a crime, unless it shall be proved that I placed them in offices of trust and responsibility, for which they were unfit.

"But while I unequivocally deny that I am sole and prime minister, and that to my influence and direction all the measures of government must be attributed; yet I will not shrink from the responsibility which attaches to the post I have the honour to hold; and should, during the long period in which I have sat upon this bench, any one step taken by government be proved to be either disgraceful, or disadvantageous to the nation, I am ready to hold myself accountable.

"To conclude, Sir, though I shall always be proud of the honour of any trust or confidence from his majesty; yet I shall always be ready to remove from his councils and presence, when he thinks fit; and therefore I should think myself very little concerned in the event of the present question, if it were not for the encroachment that will thereby be made upon the prerogatives of the crown. But I must think, that an address to his majesty to remove one of his servants, without so much as alleging any particular crime against him, is one of the greatest encroachments that was ever made upon the prerogatives of the crown; therefore, for the sake of my master, without any regard for my own, I hope all those that have a due regard for our constitution, and for the rights and prero-

gatives of the crown, without which our constitution cannot be preserved, will be against this motion."

This speech made a deep impression on the house. It was delivered in a most animated and fascinating manner, and with more dignity than he usually assumed. The motion was negatived by 290 against 106;* a great and unusual majority, which proceeded from the schism between the tories and the Whigs, and the secession of Shippen and his friends.

The same motion was made by lord Carteret on the same day in the house of lords, and supported with more pertinacity and vigour than in the commons. The schism between the Tories and Whigs had not extended to that house, and the lords in opposition acted uniformly and consistently in one compact phalanx.

The principal speakers against the minister were, the dukes of Bedford and Argyle, the earls of Sandwich, Westmoreland, Berkshire, Carlisle, Abingdon, and Halifax, and the lords Haversham and Bathurst; the opposers of the motion were, the lord chancellor, the dukes of Newcastle and Devonshire, the bishop of Salisbury (Sherlock) the earl of Ilay, and lord Hervey.

The motion was negatived by 108 against 59, but a warm protest was signed by 31 peers. The prince of Wales was present; but did not vote; and it was remarked that several peers who had places under government, particularly

* Journals.

the earl of Wilmington, did not divide with either party.*

Immediately after the motion was thus disposed of, the duke of Marlborough rose, and moved a resolution, "that any attempt to inflict any kind of punishment on any person, without allowing him an opportunity to make his defence, or without proof of any crime or misdemeanor committed by him, is contrary to natural justice, to the fundamental laws of this realm, and to the ancient established usage of parliaments; and it is a high infringement on the liberties of the subject."

The truth of this proposition was admitted by the warmest friends of the last motion. Contrary, however, to all principles of reasoning, they insisted upon the treaties that lay before them, as being full evidences against the minister, but without offering to prove that those treaties had been solely conducted by him, or that they were detrimental in themselves to the honour and interest of the nation. They made, however, a faint endeavour to set aside the motion, upon the previous question, but it was carried, though strong protests were entered upon both questions.†

In this whole transaction, the greatest surprise was excited by the conduct of Shippen.

His secession exposed him to much obloquy from the party whom he deserted. Some inferred, that his absence was purchased by a bribe, and did not scruple to affirm, that he

* Lords' Debates. Tindal. † Tindal, vol. 20. p. 429.

received an annual pension from government;* others have been so unjust as to assert, that this rumour was industriously raised by Walpole, to decry his integrity, and diminish his influence.† It might be sufficient to refute this unjust reflection, by observing, that the fortune of his wife placed him far above all temptation, and that he had exhibited a strong proof of disinterestedness, at a very trying period. When Shippen was committed to the Tower, for declaring that the only infelicity in his majesty's reign was, his ignorance of our language and constitution, and that the speech from the throne was rather calculated for the meridian of Germany, than of Great Britain; the prince of Wales, then dissatisfied with his father, sent general Churchill, his groom of the bed-chamber, to him, offering a present of £.1,000; which Shippen declined.‡ That he was honest and inflexible, is undoubted! Even Walpole himself has attested this truth, by repeatedly declaring, not only while he was at the head of affairs, but after his resignation, not only during the life of Shippen, but after his death, that he would not say who was corrupted, but he would say who *was* not corruptible; and that man was Shippen.§

The real cause of his secession, I am enabled to ascertain, from the account of a person nearly

* Opinions of the duchess of Marlborough.

† Sheridan's Life of Swift, p. 222.

‡ Etough, from Dr. Middleton, to whom it was communicated by Shippen.

§ From lord Orford.

related to him. Sir Robert Walpole having discovered a correspondence, which one of Shippen's friends carried on with the Pretender, he requested the minister to save his friend. Sir Robert willingly complied; and then said, "Mr. Shippen, I cannot desire you to vote with the administration, for with your principles, I have no right to expect it. But I only require, whenever any question is brought forward in the house personally affecting me, that you will recollect the favour I have now granted to you." It is likewise to be observed, that this was only a temporary truce; for he soon resumed his accustomed opposition, and gave his assistance to those strenuous measures, which drove the minister from the helm.

If uniformity of principles, and consistency of conduct, be admitted as a merit, William Shippen certainly deserves that eulogium, as much or more than any other member of the house of commons. Yet in considering the persons who formed the minority, we ought to be on our guard, lest we mistake the heat of party for true patriotism; and we should also be wary in trusting to expressions which are become almost cant words, and have been handed from one writer to another, until they have been adopted as unquestionable truths. Thus he is called by various writers, "*the English Cato*," "*inflexible patriot*;" and Pope has said of him,

> I love to pour out all myself, as plain
> As *honest Shippen*, or downright Montaigne.

But though we may allow him to be honest and incorruptible, yet the appellation of true patriot, can by no means be justly conferred on him; unless we should style that man a patriot, who was notoriously disaffected to the protestant succession, and publicly known to be in the interests of the Pretender; who did not affect even to conceal his sentiments; who in the heterogeneous meetings of the opposition, disgusted the old Whigs with declarations on the necessity of restoring the Stuarts;* and who in company with his intimate friends, was often heard to declare, that he waited for orders from Rome, before he would give his vote in the house of commons.

The family of Shippen was settled in Cheshire. His father, who was rector of Stockport, had four sons, one of whom was president of Brasen Nose college, Oxford, a man of distinguished abilities, and of the same principles with his brother; and one daughter, who married Mr. Leyborne, a gentleman of respectable family in Yorkshire.

William Shippen was born about the year 1672, and received his education at Stockport school, which was conducted with great credit by a master whose name was Dale. He first came into parliament in 1707, for Bramber in Sussex, in the place of John Asgill, who was expelled for blasphemy, by the interest of lord Plymouth, whose son Dixie Windsor, was his

* From the bishop of Salisbury, communicated to him by lord Bath.

brother-in-law. He again represented that borough in 1710. In 1713, he was chosen for Saltash in Cornwall, probably by government interest, but waved his seat in 1714, on being elected for Newton in Lancashire, through the interest of Mr. Legh of Lime Park, in Cheshire, whose aunt, lady Clarke, was married to his brother Dr. Shippen. This borough he continued to represent until his death. His paternal estate was very small, not exceeding £.400 a year, but he obtained a fortune of not less than £.70,000 by his wife, who was daughter and co-heiress of Sir Richard Stote, knight, of the county of Northumberland, by whom he left no children. His way of living was in all respects simple and economical. Before his marriage he never exceeded his income, and even afterwards his expenses were not proportionate to his estate.

For a short period he had apartments in Holland-house, from whence he dates several of his letters to bishop Atterbury, with whom he maintained a constant correspondence, during his exile.* And William Morrice mentions him in one of his letters as a person who continued fixed to his principles, or as he expresses himself, *as honest as ever.* He seems to have had no country residence, except a hired house on Richmond-hill, but made excursions in summer to his wife's relations in Northumberland. His usual place of abode was London, in the latter period of his life, in Norfolk Street, and his

* Intercepted Letters. Orford Papers.

house was the rendezvous for persons of rank, learning, and abilities. His manner was pleasing and dignified, and his conversation was replete with vivacity and wit.

Shippen and Sir Robert Walpole had always a personal regard for each other. He was frequently heard to say, Robin and I are two honest men. He is for king George, and I for king James; but those men with long cravats (meaning Sandys, Sir John Rushout, Gybbon, and others) only desire places, either under king George, or king James.

By the accounts of those who had heard him in the house of commons,* his manner was highly energetic and spirited, as to sentiment and expression; but he generally spoke in a low tone of voice, with too great rapidity, and held his glove before his mouth. His speeches usually contained some pointed period, which peculiarly applied to the subject in debate, and which he uttered with great animation.

Shippen published several pamphlets, the titles of which I cannot ascertain. He may be supposed to have obtained some reputation as a poet, by the mention which Sheffield, duke of Buckingham, makes of him in his poem, "The Election of a Poet Laureat:"

> To Shippen, Apollo was cold with respect,
> But said in a greater assembly he shin'd:
> As places were things he had ever declin'd.

Shippen wrote two political poems, "Faction

* From the late earl of Orford.

Displayed," and "Moderation Displayed." In the first he draws the characters of the great Whig lords, under the names of the principal Romans, who were engaged in Cataline's conspiracy. This satire is severe and caustic, but the lines are, in general, rough and inharmonious. The concluding passage, which refers to the death of the duke of Gloucester, is not without merit:

So by the course of the revolving spheres,
Whene'er a new discover'd star appears;
Astronomers, with pleasure and amaze,
Upon the infant luminary gaze.
They find their heavens enlarg'd, and wait from thence
Some blest, some more than common influence;
But suddenly, alas! the fleeting light
Retiring, leaves their hopes involv'd in endless night.

His wife was extremely penurious, and from a peculiarity of temper, unwilling to mix in society. She was much courted by queen Caroline, but having imbibed from her husband a great independence of principle, ostentatiously affected to decline all intercourse with the royal family.

The fortune which he received with his wife, and the money which he had saved, came to her on his death, in consequence of a compact, that the survivor should inherit the whole. As neither he nor any of his brothers left any sons, his paternal estate passed to his nephew Dr. Leyborne, principal of Alban-hall, Oxford, and Mr. Leyborne, a merchant of the factory at Lisbon. The widow of Shippen lived to a great age: her

infirmities being such as to prevent her making a will, her ample fortune therefore devolved on her sister Mrs. Dixie Windsor.*

* Shippen's niece, Miss Leyborne, was married to the Rev. Mr. Taylor. She was mother to Mrs. Willes, widow of the late learned and much respected judge, to whom I am principally indebted for these anecdotes. A collateral branch of the family of Shippen is settled in Philadelphia, one of them married Laurens, who was president of the congress, and another, the American general Arnold.

CHAPTER 57.

1741.

Proceedings of Parliament on the Austrian Subsidy—Grant of Three hundred thousand Pounds to the Queen of Hungary—Her Inflexibility—and disastrous Situation.

THE only parliamentary measure in this session which deserves farther notice, was the grant of a subsidy to the queen of Hungary, which finally involved England in a war with France. It was undoubtedly neither consonant to the wishes nor sentiments of the minister, who had earnestly exerted himself to form an accommodation between Prussia and Austria, to promote a measure calculated to encourage the obstinacy of Maria Theresa, at a moment when she seemed wavering and irresolute. But the voice of the nation loudly echoed the unceasing cry of opposition in favour of this magnanimous heroine. The king was alarmed for his German dominions, the majority of the cabinet inclined to vigorous measures, and it was imagined that a decided resolution of parliament to support the house of Austria, would intimidate the king of Prussia, and induce him to lower his terms of accommodation.

In consequence of these prevailing senti-

ments, the king opened the subject in a speech from the throne on the 8th of April. He said,

"At the opening of this session, I took notice to you of the death of the late Emperor, and of my resolution to adhere to the engagements I am under, in order to maintain the balance of power, and the liberties of Europe, on that important occasion. The assurances I received from you, in return to this communication, were perfectly agreeable to that zeal and vigour, which this parliament has always exerted in the support of the honour and interest of my crown and kingdoms, and of the common cause.

"The war which has since broke out, and been carried on in part of the Austrian dominions, and the various and extensive claims which are publicly made on the late Emperor's succession, are new events, that require the utmost care and attention, as they may involve all Europe in a bloody war, and in consequence, expose the dominions of such princes as shall take part, in support of the Pragmatic Sanction, to imminent and immediate danger. The queen of Hungary has already made a requisition of the twelve thousand men, expressly stipulated by treaty; and thereupon I have demanded of the king of Denmark, and of the king of Sweden, as Landgrave of Hesse Cassel, their respective bodies of troops, consisting of six thousand men each, to be in readiness to march forthwith to the assistance of her Hungarian majesty. I am also concerting such further measures as may obviate and disappoint the dangerous designs

and attempts that may be forming, or carried on, in favour of any unjust pretensions, to the prejudice of the house of Austria. In this complicated and uncertain state of things, many incidents may arise, during the time when, by reason of the approaching conclusion of this parliament, it may be impossible for me to have your advice and assistance, which may make it necessary for me to enter into still larger expenses for maintaining the Pragmatic Sanction. In a conjuncture so critical, I have thought it proper to lay these important considerations before you; and to desire the concurrence of my parliament, in enabling me to contribute in the most effectual manner to the support of the queen of Hungary, to prevent by all reasonable means the subversion of the house of Austria, and to maintain the liberties and balance of power in Europe."*

When the commons returned, Mr. Clutterbuck † recapitulated the occasion which had induced the king to make this application. He expatiated on the ambitious designs of France, exposed the danger of Europe, from the destruction of the house of Austria, the injustice of Prussia, in the invasion of Silesia, and the wisdom and propriety of asserting the Pragmatic Sanction, and fulfilling their engagements with the house of Austria. As by this conduct, he observed, the king would expose his electoral dominions, and as the danger would be increased, not by any disputes with the neighbouring princes, but

* Journals. Chandler. † A lord of the treasury.

by his firmness in asserting the general rights of Europe, and as the consequences of this conduct would be chiefly beneficial to Great Britain, the house ought to support him in the prosecution of this design. He concluded, "I hope every gentleman in this house will agree with me, that we ought to declare our approbation of these measures, in such terms as may show to the world, that those who shall dare to obstruct them, must resolve to incur the resentment of this nation, and expose themselves to all the opposition that the parliament of Great Britain can send forth against them. We ought to pronounce that the territories of Hanover will be considered on this occasion as the dominions of England, and that any attack on one or the other will be equally resented. I therefore move, that an humble address be presented, "to express our dutiful sense of his majesty's regard for the rights of the queen of Hungary, and for maintaining the Pragmatic Sanction; to declare our concurrence in the prudent measures, which his majesty is pursuing for the preservation of the liberties and balance of power in Europe; to acknowledge his majesty's wisdom and resolution, in not suffering himself to be diverted from steadily persevering in his just purposes of fulfilling his engagements with the house of Austria."*

Fox supported the address, and observed, "If the proposed opposition to the king of Prussia should incite him, or any other power, to an

* Gentleman's Magazine for 1742.

invasion of his majesty's foreign dominions, we cannot refuse them our protection and assistance; for as they suffer for the cause which we engaged to support, and suffer only by our measures, we are, at least as allies, obliged by the laws of equity, and the general compacts of mankind, to arm in their defence; and what may be claimed by the common right of allies, we shall surely not deny them, only because they own the same monarch with ourselves."

As for some time the opposition had been clamorous in arraigning the minister for not supporting the queen of Hungary, they could not consistently resist the motion. But fortunately, the expression in the speech alluding to Hanover, and the specific declaration of the member who moved the address, that the king's German dominions were the object of defence, furnished an opportunity of descanting on the popular topic of Hanoverian interest, without appearing to decry the propriety of supporting the Pragmatic Sanction, or arraigning the principles on which the motion was founded.

Pulteney readily allowed the ambitious designs of France, and the necessity of counteracting them. He then observed, that the only hopes of effecting that beneficial purpose rested on the house of Austria. For this reason the uniform exertions of this country had been employed in aggrandising that power, as a counterpoise to the increasing weight of the house of Bourbon. But this wise plan was wholly overturned, and the fabric which this country had

so long and so assiduously laboured to erect, was at once destroyed, by the treaty of Hanover; and from that time, almost to the present moment, almost all our exertions had been uniformly directed to the same mischievous purpose. "By what impulse," he added, "or by what infatuation, these assertors of liberty, these enemies of France, these guardians of the balance of power, were on the sudden prevailed on to declare in favour of the power whom they had so long thought it their chief interest and highest honour to oppose, must be discovered by sagacity superior to mine. But after such perplexity of councils, and such fluctuation of conduct, if our concurrence is necessary to increase his majesty's influence on the continent, to animate the friends of the house of Austria, or to repress the disturbers of the public tranquillity, I shall willingly unite with the most zealous advocates for the administration, in any vote of approbation or assistance, not contrary to the act of settlement, that important and well concerted act, by which the present family was advanced to the throne, and by which it was provided that England shall never be involved in a war for the enlargement or protection of the dominions of Hanover, dominions, from which we never expected nor received any benefit, and for which therefore nothing ought to be either suffered or hazarded.

"If it should again be necessary to form a confederacy, and to unite the powers of Europe against the house of Bourbon, that ambitious

and restless family, by which the repose of the world is almost every day interrupted, which is incessantly labouring against the happiness of human nature, and seeking every hour an opportunity of new encroachments, I declare that I shall not only, with the greatest cheerfulness, bear my share of the public expense, but endeavour to reconcile others to their part of the calamities of war. This I have advanced, in confidence that sufficient care shall be taken, that in any new alliance, we shall be parties, not principals, that the expense of war, as the advantage of victory, shall be common; and that those who unite with us shall be our allies, not our mercenaries."

The reply of the minister was specific and manly: "We are obliged, by this treaty, to supply the house of Austria with twelve thousand men, and the Dutch, who were engaged in it, by our example, have promised a supply of five thousand. This force, joined to those armies which the large dominions of that family enable them to raise, were conceived sufficient to repel any enemy by whom their rights should be invaded. But because in affairs of such importance, nothing is to be left to hazard, because the preservation of the equipoise of power, on which the liberties of almost all mankind, who can call themselves free, must be acknowledged to depend, ought to be rather certain, than barely probable; it is stipulated farther, both by the Dutch and ourselves, that if the supplies specified in the first article shall appear

insufficient, we shall unite our whole force in the defence of our ally, and struggle once more for independence, with ardour proportioned to the importance of our cause.

"By these stipulations, no engagements have been formed, that can be imagined to have been prohibited by the act of settlement, by which it is provided, that the house of Hanover shall not plunge this nation into a war, for the sake of their foreign dominions, without the consent of the parliament; for this war is by no means undertaken for the particular security of Hanover, but for the general advantage of Europe, to repress the ambition of the French, and to preserve ourselves and our posterity from the most abject dependance upon a nation, exasperated against us by long opposition and hereditary hatred.

Nor is the act of settlement only preserved unviolated by the reasons of the present alliance, but by the regular concurrence of the parliament, which his majesty has desired, notwithstanding his indubitable right of making peace and war by his own authority. I cannot, therefore, imagine upon what pretence it can be urged that the law, which requires that no war shall be made on account of the Hanoverian dominions without the consent of parliament is violated, when it is evident that the war is made upon other motives, and the concurrence of the parliament is solemnly desired."

Sandys having made the same objection as Pulteney, and observed that the motion was in-

consistent with the trust reposed in the commons by the constitution, who owe allegiance to the king of Great Britain, and not to the Elector of Hanover, was answered by Horace Walpole, who defended the treaty of Hanover. After a few remarks from Viner, against the propriety of opposing the king of Prussia's demands, before they were fully understood, lord Gage concluded the debate by observing, "I have always been taught that allegiance to my prince is consistent with fidelity to my country, that the interest of the king and the people of Great Britain is the same, and that he only is a true subject of the crown, who is a steady promoter of the happiness of the nation.

"For this reason I think it necessary to declare, that Hanover is always to be considered as a sovereignty separate from that of England, and as a country with laws and interests distinct from ours; and it is the duty of the representatives of this nation, to take care that interests so different may never be confounded, and England may incur no expense of which Hanover alone can enjoy the advantage. If the elector of Hanover should be engaged in war with any of the neighbouring sovereigns, who should be enabled by a victory to enter into the country, and carry the terrors of war through all his territories, it would by no means be necessary for this nation to interpose; for the elector of Hanover might lose his dominions without any disadvantage or dishonour to the king or people of England."

†

It was evident that the minority, in making these observations, did not intend to oppose the motion, but only to cast a reproach upon administration; for the question was carried without a division.*

The address being carried on the 13th of April, the minister moved for an aid of £.300,000 to the queen of Hungary. He briefly stated the necessity of preventing the dismemberment of the Austrian dominions, in which the interests of Great Britain were necessarily involved. Shippen opposed the motion, in a speech replete with sarcastic irony. He said, "though it cannot be expected I have forgotten the resentment which I have formerly drawn upon myself by an open declaration of my sentiments with regard to Hanover, † I stand up again with equal confidence, to make my protestations against any interposition in the affairs of that country, and to avow my dislike of the promise lately made to defend it: A promise, inconsistent, in my opinion, with that important and inviolable law, the act of settlement! A promise which, could it have been foreknown, would, perhaps, have for ever precluded from the succession, that illustrious family, to which we owe such numberless

* It is remarkable that Chandler has omitted to mention this debate, although it is given in the Gentleman's Magazine, from which publication he took the succeeding debate.—Tindal slightly alludes to it, in a manner, however, which authenticates the account in the Gentleman's Magazine. Neither Smollett or Belsham take the least notice of it.

† Alluding to his commitment to the tower. See vol. 1. chap. 17. p. 194.

blessings, such continued felicity. Far be it from me to insinuate that we can be too grateful to his majesty, or too zealous in our adherence to him. Let us only remember that true gratitude consists in real benefits, in promoting the true interest of him to whom we are indebted; and surely by hazarding the welfare of Great Britain in defence of Hanover, we shall very little consult the advantage or promote the greatness of our king.

"It is well known how inconsiderable, in the sight of those by whom the succession was established, Hanover appeared in comparison with Great Britain. Those men, to whom even their enemies have seldom denied praise, for knowledge and capacity, and who have been so loudly celebrated by many who have joined in the last address, for their honest zeal, and the love of their country, enacted, that the king of Great Britain should never visit those important territories, which we have so solemnly promised to defend, at the hazard of their happiness. It was evidently their design that our sovereign, engrossed by the care of his new subjects, a care which, as they reasonably imagined, would arise from gratitude for dignity and power so liberally conferred, should in time forget that corner of the earth, on which his ancestors had resided, and act, not as elector of Hanover, but as king of Great Britain, as the governor of a mighty nation, and the lord of large dominions.

"It was expressly determined, that this nation should never be involved in a war for the de-

fence of the dominions on the continent; and doubtless the same policy that has restrained us from extending our conquests in countries, from which some advantages might be received, ought to forbid all expensive and hazardous measures, for the sake of territories from whence no benefit can be reaped."*

Viner followed Shippen in opposing the grant, and after considering the dispute between Austria and Prussia as a business in which England had no immediate concern, exclaimed, "Are we to stand up singly in defence of the Pragmatic Sanction, to fight the quarrel of others, or live in perpetual war that our neighbours may be at peace?"†

The minister and his friends took no notice of the indecorous allusion in Shippen's speech; but defended the motion on the ground of national faith. After a few observations from Pulteney, who supported the expediency of the measure, and some farther remarks from the minister, the question was carried without a division.

This grant, however, founded on justice, and consistent with national honour, must be lamented as premature, because it frustrated the wise plan which Walpole was forming for the pacification of Germany. He saw and lamented the difficulties which prevented an accommoda-

* Chandler.

† Ibid. This debate is greatly misrepresented by Belsham. He observes, "HONEST SHIPPEN *only* ventured to oppose this wild and wanton waste of public money." To support this assertion he has transferred Viner's speech to the first session of the next parliament. See Belsham, vol. 2. p. 44. 46.

tion with Prussia; he strongly inculcated the necessity of a grand confederacy against France, and conscious that all alliances to that purpose would prove inefficient, unless Prussia was included, he laboured to overcome the pertinacious resistance of the queen of Hungary. By his direction, Horace Walpole had frequent conferences with count Ostein,* the Imperial minister in London; in which he fully explained the state of Europe, the designs of France, and the peculiar situation of England. He represented in such strong terms the fatal consequences to be apprehended from the hostility of the king of Prussia, and the good effects to be derived from his alliance, as fully convinced the Austrian minister. Ostein declared his ready assent to the force of these arguments, and promised to place them in so favourable a light, as should induce the queen to close with the propositions of Prussia. But this design was fatally counteracted by the spirit of Maria Theresa, by her reliance on the promises of France, and particularly by the ill-judged enthusiasm of the British nation.

The vote of £. 300,000 had scarcely passed the commons, before lord Carteret assured Ostein, that the grant of that subsidy was not owing to the good disposition of the ministry, but extorted by the unanimous call of parliament, and the general voice of the people. Accordingly, the Austrian minister instantly

* Letter from Horace Walpole to the duke of Cumberland, Nov. 29, 1746. Walpole Papers.

changed his opinion, and instead of seconding the efforts of Walpole to persuade his mistress to conclude an accommodation with the king of Prussia, encouraged her to persevere in rejecting his demands, because the British nation would pour out the last drop of their blood, and spend their last penny, in support of her just cause.*

In consequence of her inflexibility, the king of Prussia continued his inroads. He over-ran and conquered the remaining part of Silesia, and the grand confederacy, planned and consolidated by France, attacked the Austrian dominions on all sides. The elector of Bavaria, at the head of 70,000 troops, took Passau and Lintz, summoned Vienna to surrender, made himself master of Bohemia, was inaugurated king at Prague, and expected every moment his elevation to the Imperial throne. Two French armies poured like a torrent over the countries of Germany. The one, under marshal Broglio, joined the elector of Bavaria, and took possession of Prague. The other, led by marshal Maillebois, hovered on the banks of the Rhine, and threatening to spread themselves over Westphalia, awed the electorate of Hanover, and compelled George the Second to desert Maria Theresa, and to accept a neutrality, which was condemned both at home and abroad as a scandalous and pusillanimous measure.

The king of Sardinia threatened hostilities, and a Spanish army, under the marquis of Montemar, marched from Naples towards the fron-

* Horace Walpole to the duke of Cumberland. Walpole Papers.

tiers of the Milanese; while the infant, Don Philip, at the head of a considerable corps, was preparing to penetrate through Dauphiné and Savoy, into Austrian Lombardy.

Maria Theresa, deserted by Russia and the United Provinces, and by all her allies, except Great Britain, quitted Vienna, which was preparing for a siege, took refuge at Presburg, and threw herself on the affection and zeal of her Hungarian subjects. Compelled by imperious necessity, she purchased the neutrality of Prussia, by the cession of lower Silesia. Her situation was truly deplorable; and her disasters rebounded on the minister. To his sinister auspices it was attributed that the constellation of the house of Bourbon seemed ascending to its zenith, and the stars of England and Austria declining towards the horizon.

CHAPTER 58.

1741.

Dissolution of Parliament—State of the Ministry—Walpole deserted or secretly thwarted by many of his former Friends—Successful Exertions of the Opposition—Westminster Election—Schism in the Cabinet—Coolness of the King—Neutrality of Hanover—Supineness of Walpole—Clamours against him.

ON the 25th of April, the king put an end to the last session of this parliament, in a speech from the throne, in which, after thanking them for the zeal with which they had supported the measures of government, he added, "I will immediately give the necessary orders for calling a new parliament. There is not any thing I set so high a value upon, as the love and affection of my people; in which I have so entire a confidence, that it is with great satisfaction, I see this opportunity put into their hands, of giving me fresh proofs of it, in the choice of their representatives."*

Writs were issued for electing a new house of commons, returnable the 25th of June.

On the expiration of the parliament commenced the struggle of the contending parties,

* Journals, vol. 22. p. 337.

which was to terminate in the removal, or the firm establishment of Walpole.

Notwithstanding a strong remonstrance from the minister, the king embarked for his German dominions, on the 7th of May.

The minister was left in a precarious situation, to manage the elections, in the midst of an unsuccessful war, at variance with the majority of the cabinet, and with the general spirit of the nation against him; at a time when the fears of Jacobitism, and the dread of a popish Pretender, had begun to subside. In this emergency, betrayed by his pretended friends, deserted by those who ought to have supported him, deceived in imagining that the triumphant majority which had thrown out the motion to remove him, was an indication of the people's affection, or conceiving that a firm coalition between the Tories and disaffected Whigs, could not take place in time to oppose him, he abandoned himself to an inconsiderate security, and neglected to take his usual precautions.

The first great opposition to government took its rise in the city of Westminster, where the court was supposed to possess an unbounded influence. It had been usual for the electors to return the two members who were recommended by the crown. The representatives in the last parliament were, Sir Charles Wager, first lord of the admiralty, and lord Sundon, a lord of the treasury; and it was supposed that they would have been re-chosen as usual, without opposition. But lord Sundon was very unpopular. He had

been raised from a low condition to an Irish peerage, through the interest of his wife, who had been favourite bed-chamber woman to queen Caroline. The other candidate, Sir Charles Wager, was unexceptionable, both in his public and private character; but his attachment to the minister was a sufficient objection.

Some electors of Westminster proposed, very unexpectedly, admiral Vernon, then in the height of his popularity, and Mr. Edwin, a private gentleman of considerable fortune, whose wife, lady Charlotte, was lady of the bed-chamber to the princess of Wales. The opposition at first despised, became formidable; and Sir Charles Wager being summoned to convoy the king to Holland, the management of the election was entrusted to ignorant vestrymen and violent justices. The party in opposition to the court candidates became very tumultuous. The majority of the electors were decidedly in favour of the ministerial candidates; but lord Sundon was imprudently advised to close the poll, to order a party of guards to attend, and while the military power surrounded the hustings, the high bailiff returned him and Sir Charles Wager. This imprudent conduct highly exasperated the populace; the guards were insulted, Sundon was attacked, and narrowly escaped with life.

The example of the opposition at Westminster, diffused a general spirit throughout the kingdom, and violent contests were excited in all quarters. Large sums for supporting the expenses were subscribed by Pulteney, the duchess

of Marlborough, and the prince of Wales, * who contracted great debts on this memorable occasion; and the managers of opposition employed this money with great advantage. Lord Falmouth gained over many of the Cornish boroughs, which had usually returned the members recommended by the crown. The duke of Argyle exerted himself with such effect in Scotland, that he baffled all the efforts of his brother, the earl of Ilay, who had long managed the interest of the crown in that quarter; and the majority of Scottish members, who had formed a strong phalanx in favour of government, were now ranged on the contrary side. These acquisitions were considered by opposition as a sure omen of success; and Dodington, in a letter to the duke of Argyle, drew a comparative statement of the two sides, in the future parliament, highly unfavourable to the ministerial party.† He justly observed, that a majority of sixteen, which was the utmost that the most sanguine friends of the minister could entertain hopes of forming at the commencement of the session, would soon become a minority. He laid down a plan of conduct and attack, which was wisely formed, and ably executed, the homogeneous parts were consolidated, and the whole phalanx, however divided and discordant in other respects, moved on uniformly to one great object, the removal of the minister.

* Glover in his Posthumous Memoirs recently published, asserts, that he expended £.12,000 to carry the Westminster Election.

† Dodington to the duke of Argyle, June 18, 1741. Correspondence.

Many causes concurred, in the present crisis, to render the efforts of Walpole for securing a sufficient majority in the new parliament ineffectual. He had continued so long in full power, that many, like the subjects of the Pope during a protracted reign, pined for a new administration, from a mere desire of change. Others formed dreams of future splendour and happiness, which were to beam on the nation, when the minister was removed; that minister, who was styled the father of corruption, who was accused of squandering the public money, and of drawing from the plunder of his devoted country, such immense riches as no individual had ever before amassed; who alone prevented the suppression of numerous taxes, the abolition of the national debt, and obstructed those plans of reform, which were to restore credit and dignity to the king and parliament. His fall was to produce a new æra, the revival of the golden age; a junction of all parties was to take place, and the sovereign, instead of being the chief of a sect, was to become at once the father of his people, and to reign in the hearts of his subjects. These notions were industriously circulated, and greedily swallowed by the deluded populace, until his removal became an object of national concern.

In consequence of the popular clamour for a war with Spain, the resistance of the minister was deemed a shameful pusillanimity and dereliction of national honour, and became the favourite theme of satire and contumely, both

in prose and rhyme. "Sir Robert Walpole," as Burke justly observes, "was forced into the war in 1739, by the people, who were inflamed to this measure, by the most leading politicians, by the first orators, and the greatest poets of the times. For that war Pope sung his dying notes. For that war Johnson, in more energetic strains, employed the voice of his early genius. For that war Glover distinguished himself in the way in which his merit was the most natural and happy. The crowd readily followed the politicians, in the cry for a war which threatened little bloodshed, and which promised victories that were attended with something more solid than glory. A war with Spain was a war of plunder."*

But even those who acted with him laboured to undermine his power. Wilmington wished his downfall, trusting that he should succeed as first lord of the treasury. He accordingly caballed with the principal leaders of opposition, and in a letter† to Dodington, congratulated him on his success in the elections of Melcomb and Weymouth, against the candidates supported by the minister. Newcastle, who had hitherto acted an underpart, aspired to be leader of the Whigs, and flattered himself that on the removal of Walpole, a considerable addition of power would be placed in his hands. He even made clandestine overtures to the duke of

* Thoughts on a Regicide Peace.

† Correspondence, May 16, 1741.

Argyle, which had been disclosed to the minister.*

The minister was also greatly embarrassed with the conduct of foreign affairs, on which he was not always confidentially consulted. The negotiation which settled the neutrality of Hanover, was begun and nearly concluded, not only without his approbation, but almost without his knowledge. † The first positive information he received of it, was a private letter from the king, which was delivered to him in the presence of the duke of Newcastle, to whom he never disclosed the contents. ‡ He was apprehensive lest the nation should impute to him a measure so extremely unpopular. He complained that lord Harrington, the secretary of state who attended the king to Hanover, had not given earlier notice to the cabinet of England, and he told a foreign agent, § that the neutrality of Hanover was compulsory, and could not affect England. On mature reflection, however, he appreciated the necessity of the measure, and though dissatisfied with the commencement of the negotiation, approved and sanctioned its conclusion.

Every method was now employed to traduce his character. The most calumnious reports were invented and diffused. It was rumoured

* Etough, from Sir Robert Walpole.

† From the earl of Hardwicke.

‡ Duke of Newcastle to lord Hardwicke. July 19, 1741. Hardwicke Papers.

§ Zambini to baron Haslang. Orford Papers.

that admiral Haddock had orders to avoid meeting and intercepting the Spanish transports carrying troops to Italy, for the purpose of taking possession of Tuscany, Parma, and Placentia, for Don Philip, under the guaranty of England. Even such wild and absurd fictions,*

* These idle reports were repeated in an infamous pamphlet, intituled, "A Key to some late important Transactions, in several Letters from a certain Great Man, nobody knows where, wrote nobody knows when, and directed to nobody knows who," 1742. In the Memoirs of Madame Pompadour, is inserted a pretended letter from Sir Robert Walpole, to cardinal Fleury, requesting 3 millions of livres, to bribe the English parliament. "Je païe un subside à la moitié du parlement pour le tenir dans les bornes pacifiques: mais comme le roi n'a pas assez d'argent, & que ceux à qui je n'en donne point se déclarent ouvertement pour la guerre, il conviendroit que vôtre eminence me fît passer trois-millions-tournois, pour diminuer la voix de ceux que crient le plus fort. L'or est un métail ici qui adoucit le sang trop belliqueux. Il n'y a point de guerrier fougueux dans le parlement, qu'une pension de deux-mille livres ne rende très pacifique. Ni plus ni moins, si l'Angleterre se déclare, il vous faudra païer des subsides aux puissances pour faire la ballance, sans compter que les succès de la guerre peuvent être incertains; au lieu qu'en m'envoïant de l'argent, vous achetez la paix de la première main, &c. &c." Memoires de Pompadour, tom. 1. p. 58. I shall employ no time in discussing this letter, the numerous falsities and absurdities of which exhibit the strongest internal evidence that it is a forgery. It would not have been worth while to notice such a letter, inserted in a spurious publication, had it not been quoted as authentic, by the anonymous biographer of the earl of Chatham, with a malicious intention (v. 1. p. 122.) and had not the ingenious author of "Anecdotes of distinguished Persons," recently given his sanction to this unfounded rumour. "The cardinal, like our excellent minister Sir Robert Walpole, was forced "into an expensive and ruinous war by the clamour of faction, and "the folly of the people. On the cardinal's part, indeed, he had "taken the most effectual method of keeping the two great nations "of France and England in perfect harmony with one another: "*He used to remit to Sir Robert a certain sum of money occasionally, "to be distributed amongst those who, from disappointment and a love "of revenge, were likely in this country to counteract his pacific intentions.*" Vol. 4. p. 239.

that he had betrayed to Fleury and Patiño, the projected operations against Spain, and that he received from those ministers large remittances to bribe the parliament were audaciously advanced, and confidently believed.

The minister had been no sooner forced into the war, than the mode of conducting it became an object of obloquy and censure. Violent murmurs were diffused throughout the nation, grounded on ill success, and on the loss of the commerce with Spain, of which those who forced the minister to commence hostilities most loudly complained. The neutrality of Hanover was represented as inconsistent with the dignity and interests of England, and falsely imputed to him. To these immediate causes of complaint were added apprehensions of future evils; the conclusion of a dishonourable peace with Spain was said to be in agitation, of which the basis was to be the restitution of Gibraltar and Minorca; the aggrandisement of France, the abasement of the house of Austria; the establishment of the elector of Bavaria on the throne of the Empire, who would always remain attached to the house of Bourbon; and the guaranty of Parma to Don Philip, which would be a shameful breach of the guaranty of the Pragmatic Sanction.

The majority by which the motion to remove him was rejected, the death of Sir William Wyndham, and the retreat of Bolingbroke into France, rendered him indolent, and inspired him with too much confidence in the support of the

king, and in the strength of his friends. "His success on this occasion," as a contemporary pamphleteer justly expresses himself, "threw him into a lethargy of power. He imagined that the breach between the Whigs and the Tories was too great to be repaired during the time of electing a new parliament; he thought that it would daily become wider; he seems to have mistaken the motives which influenced the conduct of the Tories, and formed too favourable a judgment of the temper and spirit manifested by the people on that unjust motion. He gave them time to reconcile this temporary ebb, and suffered the popular opinion against him to flow back again with increasing violence."*

While the minister laboured under this pressure of great unpopularity; while he was arraigned for the measures of others, of which he was accused of being the sole director; while the cabinet was divided, and the support from the crown so feeble; the exertions on the side of government were inadequate to the vigorous efforts made by opposition. The Tories and Jacobites were reconciled with the disaffected Whigs, and all united to demolish their common enemy. Letters from the Pretender† were circulated among the Jacobites and high Tories,

* A View of the whole Conduct of a late Eminent Patriot, p. 148.

† From lord Orford.—Enough also, in a letter to Horace Walpole, says, "The Pretender, as this your great brother positively assured me, to his certain knowledge, sent at least a hundred letters, which were transmitted to his friends, in November 1741. The purport of them was to engage them to use all possible endeavours, in order to compass Walpole's demolition." Walpole Papers.

exhorting them to use all their efforts for the purpose of effecting the disgrace of Sir Robert Walpole; and such was the temper of the people, that his fall became the open or secret wish of all parties.

CHAPTER 59.

1741—1742.

Meeting of the Parliament—Complexion of the new House of Commons—King's Speech—Walpole permits an Alteration to be made in the Address—Small Majority in Favour of the Bossiney Election—The Appointment of a Chairman of the Committee of Election carried against him—Loses the Question of the Westminster Election—Adjournment of the House—Ineffectual Attempt to detach the Prince of Wales from the Opposition—House again assembles—Walpole loses the Chippenham Election—Adjournment of the House of Commons, at the King's Request—Sir Robert Walpole created Earl of Orford, and resigns—Affecting interview with the King—Regret of his Friends.

THE new parliament assembled on the 4th of December; when Arthur Onslow was re-chosen speaker. On the 8th, the king made a speech from the throne. He said:

"It is always a great satisfaction to me to meet you assembled in parliament; and especially at this time, when the posture of affairs makes your counsel and assistance so necessary; and when by means of the new elections, I may have an opportunity of knowing the more immediate sense and disposition of my people in general, from their representatives chosen, during a season, which has been attended with a great variety of incidents of the greatest consequence and expectation, and during the course of the

war, in which we are engaged with the crown of Spain; a war in itself just and necessary, entered into by the repeated advice of both houses of parliament, and particularly recommended to me to be carried on in America, which has been my principal care. I can therefore make no doubt, but that you are met together, fully sensible of our present situation, and prepared to give me such advice, as shall be most conducive to the honour and true interest of my crown and kingdoms."

He next mentioned the powerful confederacy formed against the queen of Hungary, &c. "Had other powers," he said, "that were under the like engagements with me, answered the just expectations they had so solemnly given, the support of the common cause had been attended with less difficulty. I have, pursuant to the advice of my parliament, ever since the death of the late Emperor, exerted myself in support of the house of Austria. I have endeavoured, by the most proper and early applications, to induce other powers that were equally engaged with me, and united by common interest, to concert such measures as so important and critical a conjuncture required; and where an accommodation seemed to me to be necessary; I laboured to reconcile those princes, whose union would have been the most effectual means to prevent the mischiefs that have happened, and the best security for the safety and interest of the whole. Although my endeavours have not hitherto had the desired effect, I

cannot but still hope, that a just sense of the common and approaching danger will produce a more favourable turn in the counsels of other nations." He then exhorted parliament to put the nation in a condition of assisting friends, and defeating enemies in any attempts they might make against him or his dominions, and concluded with an exhortation, that they would act with unanimity, vigour, and dispatch.*

The remarkable caution with which the king had always mentioned any thing relating to his allies, made this speech the more noticed, and it was generally supposed not to have been dictated by the minister,† a circumstance which seemed to demonstrate, that there was a preponderant party against him in the cabinet.

It soon appeared from the complexion of the house, and the conduct of the minister, that his power and influence were on the decline. An address of thanks being proposed by Henry Herbert, some of the opposition objected to a clause, "for returning his majesty the thanks of this house, for his royal care in prosecuting the war with Spain." Sir Robert Walpole now felt, for the first time, the awkwardness of his situation, and he appeared "shorn of his strength." Instead of opposing with spirit any alteration in the address, and manfully declaring that the misfortunes of the war, could not be charged upon government, he attempted to palliate the losses which the nation had suffered, and to show that the war had not been so un-

* Journals—Chandler. † Tindal, vol. 20. p. 525.

successful as it was represented, and weakly agreed, for the sake of unanimity, to omit the paragraph relating to the Spanish war.* Pulteney availed himself of this concession; and attributed it to fear and conscious guilt. He made a long and animated speech, full of personal invectives; and anticipated the triumph of his party, by an allusion to the balance of power. He said, that not being in the secrets of government, he was ignorant of its state abroad, but congratulated the house that he had not for many years known it to be so near an equilibrium there as it was then.† He then recapitulated the principal charges which had been urged against Sir Robert Walpole from the beginning of his administration; dwelt very particularly on the mismanagement of the war with Spain, and even carried his reproach so far as to accuse him of being influenced by the enemies of the protestant establishment.

Walpole repelled this intemperate attack with unusual feebleness; and after a short but general justification of the measures of government, concluded with saying, "I am very far from hoping or desiring that the house should be satisfied with a defence like this; I know, by observing the practice of the opponents of the ministry, what fallacies may be concealed in general assertions; and am so far from wishing to evade a more strict inquiry, that if the gentleman who has thus publicly and confidentially

* Tindal, vol. 20. p. 526. Chandler.

† Orlebar to Etough, December 10, 1741. Correspondence.

accused the ministry, will name a day for inquiring into the state of the nation, I will second his motion."*

This challenge was accepted; the address, without any mention of the Spanish war, was voted; the motion made by Pulteney to fix a day for considering the state of the nation, was seconded by Walpole, and the 21st of January was appointed for that purpose.

The coolness of the address, and the omission of the clause relating to the war, essentially hurt the minister. It led his interested followers to suspect, that his power was declining; while his friends, who were steady in their attachment to the house of Brunswick, were of opinion, that stronger assurances were due to the king, for the dangers to which he exposed his electoral dominions, the French having already violated the stipulated neutrality, and threatened to take up their winter quarters in Hanover.†

The great points on which the two parties exerted their respective strength, were the decisions on contested elections. Ever since the Aylesbury contest, when the house of commons assumed the power of judging finally on the qualifications of the electors, which had been so warmly opposed by Walpole, in the commencement of his parliamentary career, the decision on elections became a mere party business. The merits of the case were seldom considered, and the questions were almost wholly carried by personal or political interests. At

* Chandler, vol. 13. p. 47. † Tindal, vol. 20. p. 527.

the opening of this parliament the contested elections were more numerous than usual; and as the power of the two contending parties ultimately depended on the decision, every nerve was strained by both sides in favour of their respective friends. The minister had been heard to declare, that there should be no quarter given in elections, and his friends trusted that the decisions would chiefly be in his favour. But these sanguine hopes were frustrated by the activity of opposition, the lukewarmness of his friends, and the treachery of his pretended partisans. The opposition made it a principal object to attend on these occasions, and it was esteemed infamous to desert a committee of election.* On the other hand, many of those who supported government often absented themselves, and not unfrequently voted against the candidates countenanced by the minister.

The first division which took place was on the Bossiney election, and the party favoured by the minister carried it only by 222 against 216. With this small majority, Walpole acted as he had done in former parliaments. He did not sufficiently adapt himself to the change of circumstances, or consult the temper of the house in the question which was next moved, for choosing a chairman of the committee of elections. This was a point of great consequence, because the chairman possessed considerable power in influencing the decisions referred to

* Dodington to the duke of Argyle, June 18, 1741. Correspondence.

the committee. Walpole acted with much imprudence in proposing Giles Earle, one of the lords of the treasury, who had been chairman during the two last parliaments, and was exceedingly unpopular. The opposition supported Dr. Lee, who was much more beloved and respected by all parties than his antagonist. The question was accordingly carried, from personal considerations, against the ministerial candidate, by a majority of 242 against 238. The loss of this question gave a mortal blow to his interest, and redoubled the spirit of his adversaries. The fatal consequences were immediately visible; several unsuccessful candidates, who had depended on his support, withdrew their petitions.

But the fate of the minister was almost decided by the determination on the Westminster election, which was one of the points he most wished to carry, and in which he had flattered himself with the most sanguine hopes. On the petition of the two rejected members, complaining of an undue election and return, December 22, the question was carried against the sitting members, by a majority of four, and the election was declared void. A motion for adjournment was negatived, and the returning officer was ordered to be taken into custody, by a majority of 217 against 215. A second motion to adjourn was also lost, and it was unanimously resolved, that the presence of armed soldiers, at an election of members of parliament, was a high infringement of the liberties of the subject,

a manifest violation of the freedom of election, and an open defiance of the laws and constitution.

On the 24th, the house adjourned to the 18th of January; and that short interval was employed by the minister in attempts to increase his friends, and to maintain himself in power; but all his efforts were ineffectual.

The state of his own health was a principal cause of his downfal. He had suffered at the latter end of the preceding year from a severe illness.* His memory was no longer so strong, nor his method of transacting business so ready as before. Hence he was incapable of making those exertions which his critical situation rendered necessary; of unmasking his treacherous friends; of exposing his enemies, and of adopting such measures as would have enabled him to act with vigour, or to retire with dignity. During this session he appeared in general absent and thoughtful. He seemed to have lost, in many instances, that contempt of abuse, and command of temper, for which he had been remarkably distinguished: he was either, contrary to his usual custom, silent, or he was irritable and fretful. In one instance he publicly declared, that if he could collect the real sense of the house, on the difficult and dangerous situation of affairs, he would support it as a minister in the cabinet. But when he made this declaration, he did not intimate his own

* From lord Orford.

opinion; a circumstance which, according to the late earl of Hardwicke, who was present on this occasion, proved the distress and concern under which he laboured.* The loss of the Westminster question ought to have been the signal of his immediate resignation, and many of his friends were of that opinion. But he still appeared anxious to retain his power as long as he was able; and during the recess of parliament, he made an ill-judged application to seduce the prince of Wales from his party, in which his own sagacity and knowledge of mankind ought to have convinced him, that he had no chance of succeeding. Being informed that the members of opposition proposed to renew the motion in parliament, for increasing the establishment of the prince, he prevailed on the king, not without the greatest difficulty, to offer an increase of £.50,000 to his annual income, and to suggest hopes that his debts should be paid, provided he would not oppose the measures of government. A message to this purpose was conveyed to the prince by the bishop of Oxford,† at the instance of lord Cholmondeley, and by command of the king. The prince, after due expressions of duty and affection, declared that he considered the message as coming from lord Cholmondeley, and not from the king, and therefore would not listen to any proposition of a similar import, so long

* From the late earl of Hardwicke.

† Secker, afterwards Arc'hbishop of Canterbury.

as Sir Robert Walpole continued at the head of administration.*

* As many erroneous narratives of this transaction have been given to the public, I shall subjoin an account, which I found among the Walpole papers, in the hand-writing of Sir Robert Walpole, and bearing the following indorsement; "An account of what passed between H. R. H. and lord Orford, January 5, 174$\frac{4}{5}$, with the printed letter that passed between the king and the prince upon the breach."

"An account of what the bishop of Oxford said to the prince of Wales from lord Cholmondeley authorised by his majesty, January 5, 174$\frac{4}{5}$.

"That if his royal highness would write a dutiful letter to his majesty, expressing his concern for what was passed, in such a manner as might be consistent with his majesty's honour to accept, representing the uneasy circumstances of his fortune, and referring them to his majesty's goodness, lord Cholmondeley had full and sufficient ground, from his knowledge of his majesty's intentions and dispositions, to assure his royal highness that his majesty would be reconciled to him; and would add £.50,000 a year to his present income, and would not require any terms from him, in relation to any of those persons who were in his royal highness's service, counsels, or confidence, nor retain any resentment or displeasure against him.

"To this lord Cholmondeley added, that there was no doubt but that his royal highness's debts would in this case be provided for, in such a manner as upon farther consideration should be found most proper and practicable.

"The answer of his royal higness, January 5, 174$\frac{4}{5}$. "His royal highness used strong expressions of duty and affection to his majesty, and answered further to this purpose: That if this had been a message directly from his majesty, it would have been his duty to have written a letter to H. M. on the occasion; but as it was a proposition that came from lord Cholmondeley, in the manner I had mentioned; his answer to lord Cholmondeley was, that he would not hearken to it, so long as Sir Robert Walpole was in power, by whom he conceived himself to have been greatly injured and to whom he thought the most prudent advice for Sir Robert Walpole himself, and the public was, that he should retire; and that he, the prince, had before this received intimations of the same nature with those I had now said to him, and desired not to have any more, whilst Sir Robert continued in power."

The resignation of Sir Robert Walpole was now considered as certain, both by his friends and enemies; but he had still more mortifications to endure before his fate was ultimately decided.

On the 18th of January the parliament again assembled; and on the 19th the question on the Berwick election was carried without a division, in favour of Alexander Hugh Campbell, against the candidate who was supported by the court. On the 20th, a bill introduced by Sir John Rushout and Sir John Hynde Cotton, for taking, examining, and stating the public accounts, passed without opposition. On the 21st, Pulteney made the celebrated motion for referring to a secret committee the papers relating to the war, which had been already presented to the house. As this motion involved in it numerous charges against the conduct of the war, stated the necessity of a parliamentary inquiry, and brought on personal invectives against the minister, Sir Robert Walpole took a considerable share in the debate, and was roused to the most animated exertions. In this last effort, he is said by his friends to have exceeded himself, and evinced such a consummate knowledge of foreign affairs as astonished the House. He was also ably defended by Pelham, Winnington, and Sir William Yonge. The question however, would have been carried but for the influence of lord Hartington, who brought over two Tory members, and by this

means, to use the expressions * of Sir Robert Wilmot, saved the country from twenty-four tyrants! The motion was negatived by a majority of only three, in the fullest house known for many years, for 503 members voted.

On this question every exertion was made by opposition, and every art used to secure a majority. The purport of the intended motion was not previously known. The minister was taken unawares; many of his friends had retired; many absented themselves by design; others, who were sent for in the course of the debate, declined, under various pretences, making their appearance, while all his opponents remained at their posts. The efforts were so great on both sides, that members were brought in from the chamber of sickness. Several voted in that condition on the side of opposition; but some who intended to have supported the minister were prevented from appearing at the division. They had been placed in an adjoining apartment belonging to lord Walpole, as auditor of the exchequer, which communicated with the house. The adversaries, aware of this fact, filled the key-hole of the door with dirt and sand, which prevented their admission into the house till the division was over. † On this occasion, as general Churchill was sitting next to the prince of Wales, who was in the house of commons to hear the debates, a member was brought in who

* Sir Robert Wilmot to the duke of Devonshire, January 23, 1744. Correspondence.

† Sir Robert Wilmot's letters, Correspondence.

had lost the use of his limbs. "So," said the prince, "I see you bring in the lame, the halt, and the blind. "Yes," replied the general, "the lame on our side, and the blind on your's."* The small majority in favour of government, notwithstanding all the exertions made by the minister, was so sure a signal of his defeat, that a motion to address the king for copies of the memorials and letters, and other papers sent to and from the king of Prussia, which had been rejected on the 18th of December, by a majority of 24, now passed without a division.

At length, on the 28th, the opposition finally triumphed. A question on the Chippenham election was carried against the minister, by a majority of one, 237 against 236, and the party gained so considerable an accession, by the desertion or absence of several members belonging to the court party, that the final decision of the Chippenham election was carried against the minister, on the 2nd of February, by a majority of 16, 241 against 225. Walpole seemed to have anticipated this event, and met it with his usual fortitude and cheerfulness. While the tellers were performing their office, he beckoned Sir Edward Bayntun, the member whose return was supported by opposition, to sit near him, spoke to him with great complacency, animadverted on the ingratitude of several individuals who were voting against him, on whom he had conferred great favours, and declared he should never again sit in that house.†

* From lord Orford.

† From Sir Edward Bayntun.

On the 3d of February the house adjourned at the king's command, signified by the chancellor, to the 18th.

On the 9th Sir Robert Walpole was created earl of Orford, and on the 11th he resigned.

It is asserted by a contemporary historian,* who possessed great means of information, that the minister would have sooner retired, had not the state of the nation and of parties rendered his continuance in power necessary for the arrangement of a new administration, and for preserving the tranquillity of the country; and that he remained in office solely in compliance with the wishes of his friends. The papers which have been committed to my inspection, and the undoubted information which I have received, enable me to contradict this assertion. He retired unwillingly and slowly. No shipwrecked pilot ever clung to the rudder of a sinking vessel with greater pertinacity than he did to the helm of state; he did not relinquish his post until he was driven from it by the desertion of his followers and the clamours of the public. Speaker Onslow, who knew him well, declared that he reluctantly quitted his station;† and if any doubt still remains, we have the testimony of the minister himself, in a confidential letter to the duke of Devonshire, in which we discover his deep concern at the desertion he had experienced, and a smothered reluctance to relinquish that power which was endeared to him by habit.

"I was unwilling to miss this opportunity of

* Tindal. † Onslow's Remarks. Correspondence, Period IV.

the messenger, that carries back the Irish bills, to give your grace an account, by a safe conveyance, of what will immediately happen in the space of three or four days. It is determined that the king shall to-morrow, when he passes the malt act, direct the two houses to adjourn themselves for a fortnight, to give time for settling a new administration. I shall go up immediately to the house of peers, by the title of earl of Orford. Lord Wilmington will be put at the head of the treasury; but what further steps will be taken, are yet by no means settled among themselves.

"To give your grace a short view of this great revolution, I must inform you that the panic was so great among what I should call my own friends, that *they all* declared my retiring was become absolutely necessary, as the only means to carry on the public business, and this to be attended with honour and security, &c. This was fixed with the duke of Newcastle, lord chancellor, lord Carteret and Mr. Pulteney; but the king has declared lord Wilmington my successor, which leaves the presidentship open, so that lord Carteret can be only president, except one of the secretaries be removed for him. This had fallen upon the duke of Newcastle, if I had not prevented it. But I am of opinion the Whig party must be kept together, which may be done with this parliament, if a Whig administration be formed. The prince was not acquainted with this sudden step, till this morning; and I have just heard he receives it in a proper manner.

"Your Grace may easily imagine, that a great deal more might be said upon this subject, than is proper to commit to paper; and when I have an opportunity, I shall explain some things to you, which are scarce credible. I believe the duke of Argyle, lord Chesterfield, and lord Cobham, have not been in the secret; and into what share they will let them, and how go on without satisfying them, I do not see; and all that I can say is, that they who thought they had but one obstacle to remove, to make all things easy, I believe before they have began their scheme, encounter such difficulties, that they are almost at a stand. But during the recess, the scene must open, to show the actors.

"I shall be very glad when the business of Ireland will permit your grace to come among us. Few honest men are to be found, and still fewer dukes of Devonshire. One of the greatest prides and pleasures of my life is, that I have the honour to call you my friend, which is a title that I will never forfeit or abandon; as occurrences happen, I will be watchful; and may still have more opportunities of observing, than it will be prudent for me to make use of. I will conclude with acquainting you that the king has behaved towards me with more grace and steadiness than can ever be enough acknowledged, and never yielded at all to the change till I made it my desire."*

It has been also asserted with no less confi-

* Sir Robert Walpole to the duke of Devonshire, London, Feb. 2, 1741-2. Correspondence, v. 3. p. 502.

dence, that the king himself was become weary of a minister, who had so long directed his affairs, who had so often opposed and obstructed his inclination for war, and who was still endeavouring to remove every obstacle which impeded the return of peace. But the same documents enable me to adduce an honourable testimony to the good faith and firmness of George the Second. Although the asperities which time and vexation occasioned in both their tempers, produced a momentary dissatisfaction; yet the king had contracted, by long habit and experience of his capacity for business, a high regard and esteem for his faithful counsellor. In vain the earl of Wilmington and the duke of Dorset had enforced the necessity of his removal, the resolution of the king was unshaken, and he did not consent to his resignation until the minister himself made it his express desire.*

The interview when he took leave was highly affecting. On kneeling down to kiss his hand, the king burst into tears, the ex-minister was so moved with such an instance of regard, that he continued for some time in that posture; and the king was unable to raise him from the ground. When he at length rose, the king testified his regret for the loss of so faithful a counsellor, expressed his gratitude for his long services, and his hopes of receiving advice on important occasions. †

* Lord Hartington to the duke of Devonshire, February 4, 1741-2. Correspondence.

† Lord Hartington to the duke of Devonshire, Correspondence.

When his resolution to resign was known, he received more honours than had been paid to him in the plenitude of power. His last levée was more numerously attended than his first. The concourse of persons of all ranks and distinctions was prodigious; and their expressions of affectionate regard and concern extremely moving.

The ex-minister received many proofs of disinterested attachment from persons to whom he had never shown any mark of particular attention. Among others, Soame Jenyns gave a testimony of his approbation, thus recorded in the words of his biographer. "Unknown to Sir Robert, and unconnected with him by acquaintance or private regard, he supported him to the utmost of his power, till he retired from his high station, making room for those who soon showed the loss the nation had sustained by the sad exchange. After he had retired, Soame Jenyns waited upon him at Chelsea, when, amongst other things which passed in conversation, lord Orford acknowledged his constant support, during the time that he had sitten in parliament, in expressions of great thankfulness; at the same time declaring, "Had those to whom, during the meridian of my power, I showed the greatest friendship, and loaded with favours, but borne as kind dispositions to me as you have done, whom I never distinguished by any particular regard, you would not now pay a visit to an ex-minister."*

* Life of Soame Jenyns, p. 37.

The old clergyman of Walsingham, who was master of the first school in which Sir Robert Walpole was instructed, came to Houghton, and told him that he had been his first master, and had predicted that he would be a great man. Being asked why he never had called on him while he was in power, he answered, "I knew that you were surrounded with so many petitioners craving preferment, and had done so much for Norfolk people, that I did not wish to intrude." "But," he added in a strain of good-natured simplicity, "I always inquired how Robin went on, and was satisfied with your proceedings."*

* From lord Orford.

PERIOD THE EIGHTH:

From the Resignation of Sir ROBERT WALPOLE *to his Death.*

1742—1745.

CHAPTER 60.

1742.

Exertions and Influence of Walpole—Negotiations with Pulteney for the Arrangement of a new Administration—Jealousies and Divisions of Opposition—Meeting at the Fountain Tavern—Interference of the Prince of Wales—Parliamentary Inquiry into the Conduct of the Ex-minister—Secret Committee—Indemnity Bill—Passes the Commons—Rejected by the Lords—Pulteney created Earl of Bath—His Unpopularity—Accusations against him—Examined and refuted.

THE minister, in retiring, had three great objects in view. 1st. To disunite the heterogeneous parties which composed the opposition. 2d. To form an administration on the Whig basis. 3d. To save himself from a public prosecution.

If the first point was effected, the others would necessarily follow. To divide the oppo-

sition, and weaken a combination which might else have been fatal to him, it became necessary to lure the duke of Argyle and the Tories, to conciliate the prince of Wales, and to detach Pulteney, who then headed the Whigs in opposition, from the Tories. To effect these views, he had recourse to the grand engine of political jealousy. He made such advances to the Tories as inspired them with fallacious hopes and unfounded notions of their own importance,* and filled the Whigs in opposition with apprehensions of being excluded from the spoils. Having succeeded in this attempt, he advised the king to form a Whig administration, and suggested the propriety of applying to Pulteney. One of the greatest difficulties under which he laboured in the course of this political transaction was, to conquer the repugnance of the king, which at this period seemed almost insuperable, and to persuade his majesty to commence the negotiation, and acquiesce in Pulteney's expected demand of a peerage. Having at length succeeded, he said to his son Horace, "I have set the king upon him," and at another time, in the farther progress of this political negotiation, he triumphantly said, making at the same time a motion with his hand as if he was locking a door, "I have turned the key of the closet upon him."†

* See Defence of the People, p. 81.—This pamphlet was written by Ralph, who received his information from Dodington, then in union with the duke of Argyle.

† From lord Orford.

When the negotiation with Pulteney first commenced, neither the documents in my possession, nor any oral information, have enabled me to ascertain; but it is probable that indirect overtures had been made some time before the recess.

Hints had been thrown out to Carteret, from some person in the royal confidence, that proposals would be made to Pulteney, as the leader of the house of commons; but a fortnight elapsed after this communication, before any step was taken At length a message came from the duke of Newcastle, requesting Pulteney to meet him privately at his secretary, Mr. Stone's, house at Whitehall. Pulteney returned for answer, that in the present juncture he could not comply with this request, without giving umbrage to his friends. He was under the necessity of declining, a private meeting; but added, that he had no objection to receive his grace publicly at his own house. A few days afterwards he received a note from the duke of Newcastle, importing, that he and the lord chancellor having a message from the king, would wait upon him.

The meeting took place in the forenoon, between the duke of Newcastle and the chancellor, on one side, and Pulteney, and Carteret, whose presence he had desired as his confidential friend on the other.

Newcastle opened the conference by saying; the king being convinced that Sir Robert Walpole was no longer supported by a majority in

the house of commons, had commanded them to offer the places which that minister possessed to Mr. Pulteney, with the power of forming his own administration, on the sole condition that the ex-minister should not be prosecuted. To this proposal Pulteney replied, "if that condition is to be made the foundation of the treaty, I will never comply with it; and even," he concluded, "should my inclination induce me to accede to these terms, yet it may not be in my power to fulfil my engagement; the heads of parties being like the heads of snakes, which are carried on by their tails. For my part," he added, "I will be no screen; but if the king should be pleased to express a desire to open any treaty, or to hold any conversation with me, I will pay my duty at St. James's, though I have not been at court for many years. I will not, however, come privately, but publicly and at noon day, in order to prevent all jealousy and suspicion."* Before they parted, some negus was brought in, and the duke of Newcastle drank, "Here is to our happier meeting." Pulteney replied, in a quotation from Shakspeare's Julius Cæsar,

"If we do meet again, why we shall smile,
"If not, why then this meeting was well made."

The account of this conference, which was soon divulged, produced the greatest advantage to the ex-minister, as it excited jealousies among the opposition against Pulteney and Carteret, for presuming to treat without their privity; and proved the germ of those dissen-

* Bishop Newton.

tions, which afterwards dissipated their strength. Some of the subordinate members of the party, particularly Pitt, the Grenvilles, and Lyttleton, willing to purchase the favour of the court, by more liberal conditions than those of Pulteney, even secretly offered, through colonel Selwyn, to secure the minister from prosecution, and answered for the concurrence of the prince. But the ex-minister, conscious of their want of influence, coolly declined the proposal.*

Meanwhile a prodigious ferment appeared throughout the nation. The Tories and Jacobites were equally irritated against the ex-minister, and the popular clamours for reform, were no less violent than discordant. A contemporary author has well described the vehement and contradictory views of the heterogeneous parties which composed the opposition. "Among those who thought themselves the most moderate, no two men agreed upon what was necessary. Some thinking that all security lay in a good place bill, about the degree and extent of which they likewise differed. Some in a pension bill, which others more justly thought would signify nothing. Some in a law for triennial parliaments, which all who did not delight in riot, or in the prospect of corruption, thought both dangerous and dubious. Some for annual parliaments, which others thought too frequent. Some for justice on the minister; others not for sanguinary views. Some for a

* This anecdote is recorded by Glover, who received it from persons present at the meeting between Lyttleton and Selwyn.

reduction of the civil list, which others thought unjust to be taken away, having been legally given. Some for the sale of all employments. Others for allowing a few. Some for taking the disposition of them from the crown, which others thought anti-constitutional. Some for allowing them to subsist, but to be given only to those who were not in parliament, that is, among themselves. Some to allow them to be given for life. Some for making the army independent. Others for no regular troops at all."*

Glover also, who was deeply engaged in the transactions of the most violent among the opposition, informs us, that the intention of his party was "*to save the nation* by procuring frequent and independent parliaments, bringing lord Orford to justice, diminishing and restraining the encroachments of the crown, and throwing *a larger share of power into the hands of the people.*"

To oppose this torrent of reform, the necessity of gaining Pulteney became more and more urgent. Though it should be admitted that personal pique and party resentment were among the motives which influenced his opposition; yet he was known to be a friend to the constitution, a sound Whig, a warm partisan to the protestant establishment, and the largeness of his property would induce him to obstruct all measures which might tend to create confusion, or perplex government.

* Faction Detected, p. 69.

The only method to conciliate him was, in appearance, to submit entirely to his demands, to prevail on him to make as few changes as possible, to introduce few obnoxious persons, and to trust the safety of Walpole to future contingencies.

This scheme was managed with so much address, that Pulteney, in forming an administration, the great outlines of which were traced by Walpole, conceived that he was dictating his own terms. It was particularly owing to his influence that Newcastle retained his situation of secretary of state, and that Harrington, who was compelled to make way for Carteret, obtained the presidentship of the council. Many of his most confidential friends were also continued in their posts.

Soon after the first conference with Newcastle, the king sent Pulteney a private message, requesting that if he did not choose to place himself at the head of the treasury, he would let lord Wilmington *slide* into it, in which Pulteney acquiesced. Carteret, who coveted that post, expressing dissatisfaction at the arrangement, Pulteney declared that he would break his own resolution, and take the place himself, if Carteret would not consent to the appointment of Wilmington, "You," he added, "must be secretary of state, as the fittest person to direct foreign affairs."*

In the course of a few days another confer-

* From the late bishop of Salisbury, confirmed by Glover.

ence was held at the same place, by the same persons. Newcastle said, that he was now commissioned by the king to make the former offers, without insisting on the condition of not prosecuting the minister; and he added, the king only requested that if any prosecution was commenced, he would not inflame it, though he might not choose to oppose it. Pulteney had already conceived considerable alarm at the violent and democratical schemes of some of his colleagues, and was therefore become more tractable. He replied, that he was not *a man of blood;* that in all his expressions importing a resolution to pursue the minister to destruction, he meant only the destruction of his power, not of his person. He could not undertake to say what was proper to be done; he must take the advice of his friends; though he was free to own, that according to his opinion some parliamentary censure, at least, ought to be inflicted for so many years of mal-administration. Newcastle then observed,* "the king trusts you will not distress the government by making too many changes in the midst of a cession of parliament, and that you and your friends will be satisfied with the removal of Sir Robert Walpole and a few others." Pulteney rejoined, he was far from desiring to perplex government, or to make too many changes at once, which would throw all things into confusion; he did not insist on a total change; and he had no objection

* Bishop Newton.

to the duke of Newcastle or the lord chancellor, but what he insisted upon, he added, was an alteration of measures as well as men. He only required that some obnoxious persons should be dismissed; that the main forts of government should be delivered into the hands of his party; a majority in the cabinet council, the nomination of a secretary of state for Scotland, and of the boards of treasury and admiralty. After some resistance, these points being finally agreed to, Newcastle supposed that in arranging the new administration, Pulteney would place himself at the head of the treasury, and declared that it was the earnest and repeated desire of the king. "As the disposition of places is in my hands," replied Pulteney, "I will accept none; I have so repeatedly declared my resolution on that head, and I will not now contradict myself." He then named the earl of Wilmington first lord of the treasury; Sandys chancellor of the exchequer; Carteret secretary of state; Sir John Rushout, Gibbon, and Waller, lords of the treasury; a new board of admiralty, including Sir John Hynde Cotton; and the marquis of Tweedale secretary of state for Scotland. For himself he demanded only a peerage, and a seat in the cabinet. Before they parted, Pulteney declared that he was under such engagements with the duke of Argyle, that he must acquaint him with all which had passed; and added, that he should not oblige him to secrecy, but leave him at liberty to inform lord Chesterfield or lord

Cobham, or any of his friends. Newcastle did not consent to this without unwillingness, and the meeting ended.*

These negotiations created great jealousies, and excited the resentment of those who were not admitted to the conferences. Two parties, at a very early period of this business, were forming against the arrangements made by Pulteney, consisting of the great body of the Tories, headed by Argyle, which party was joined by the Jacobites; and the other composed of those Whigs who were not likely to be comprised in the new arrangements. Chesterfield was disappointed that he was not made secretary of state; Waller was irritated at not being chancellor of the exchequer, and thought the situation of a lord of the treasury beneath his acceptance. Cobham, though restored to a regiment, and appointed a member of the cabinet, aspired to a far greater share of power; and the Grenvilles, Lyttleton, Pitt, and Dodington, were highly dissatisfied with their exclusion from the new administration.

In the midst of this growing dissatisfaction, a great point was gained by conciliating the prince of Wales. The arrangement with Pulteney was made without the knowledge of the

* The account of this negotiation with Pulteney, and the subsequent transactions, are principally derived from the Correspondence, Period VII.—From Communications by the bishop of Salisbury.—Life of bishop Newton, who has related the whole transaction from the authority of Pulteney, though not without some slight errors, which I have been enabled to rectify from notes and information, kindly supplied by the bishop of Salisbury.

prince, to whom it was not communicated before the 2d of February; but he received the information with due respect,* and appeared satisfied with the result. On the 6th he granted a private audience to lord Orford, and promised his protection against any attacks upon his life or fortune.

While the posts remained unfilled, and the members of opposition conceived hopes that an arrangement might take place in their favour, the great body continued apparently united; but when suspicions began to be formed of a separate negotiation, and the places of secretary of state, and chancellor of the exchequer, were disposed of, without the general concurrence, murmurs and discontents succeeded, and a schism, which lord Percival† calls "the death of the late opposition," took place on the 11th of February, when the meeting was held at the Fountain Tavern.

It consisted of not less than three hundred members of both houses. The duke of Argyle, as we are informed by a person who was present,‡ and took an active share on the side of Pulteney, expatiated, with great solemnity of speech and gesture, on the dangerous situation to which the country had been reduced by the late administration, and on the glorious and

* Sir Robert Walpole to the duke of Devonshire, Feb. 2, 1741-2. Correspondence.

† Afterwards earl of Egmont, author of Faction Detected, one of the best political pamphlets ever written. See p. 41.

‡ Faction Detected.

steady opposition which had been made to his measures. He said, "happily, at length honest endeavours and the just spirit of the people have brought us in sight of the long wished for haven, and as all parties have contributed to forward this important point, it is just that all denominations of men should receive an equal reward of their virtue. If a proper use is made of this fortunate conjuncture, this reward may be obtained. We have a right to expect the total rout of all those who formed any part of the ministerial junta, and such a measure would make room for all."

After sarcastically observing, in allusion to Pulteney, that a grain of honesty was worth a cart load of gold,* he proceeded: "But have we not much reason to fear that this use will not be made of the happy opportunity; that a few men, without any communication of their proceedings to this assembly, have arrogated to themselves the exclusive right of nomination, and from their manner we have sufficient cause to apprehend that they do not intend the general advantage. They have now been eight days engaged in this business, and if we are to judge from the few offices they have already bestowed, they may justly be accused of not acting with that vigour which the whole people have a right to expect. The choice of those already preferred cannot but supply great matter of jealousy; for as this choice has principally fallen upon the Whigs, it is an ill omen to the Tories.

* Bishop Newton.

If they are not to be provided for, the happy effects of the coalition will be destroyed; and the odious distinction of party will be again revived, to the great prejudice of the nation. It is therefore highly necessary to continue closely united, and to persevere with the same vehemence as ever, till the Tories obtain justice, and the administration is founded upon the *broad bottom* of both parties."

To these accusations, Pulteney replied with no less bitterness. He lamented the severe treatment which he and his co-adjutors had experienced in return for their services and for their share in driving the late minister from the helm, to be thus held forth and publicly charged in the face of the world, with things of which no man durst venture to accuse them in private; to be loaded with unjust suspicions and imaginary crimes, which though without foundation, would be easily believed in the present temper of the nation. "We deserve," he added, "a very different usage for the integrity with which we have hitherto proceeded, and by which we are determined to proceed. In answer to the imputation, that we have taken the management of the negotiation into our hands, let us reply, that overtures having been made to us, it was our duty (as it would have been the duty of every man, to whom such overtures had been made) to employ all our abilities and endeavours to form a happy settlement, after the divisions with which this country has been so long unhappily rent, and which could not longer subsist

without ruining the interest of the nation abroad, and incurring the danger of fatal disturbances at home. The superficial vulgar may indeed conceive that it would have been more equitable to refer the settlement to the decision of the whole party, but surely no man of tolerable understanding and experience can cherish an idea so impracticable and absurd. Government is not yet reduced to surrender at discretion, especially to an enemy who has declared publicly that they would give no quarter; government neither can, will, nor ought to be taken by storm; and it behoves gentlemen to consider the inevitable consequences of such an attempt The great points in agitation were, to change the minister, and change the measures; the one is already effected, and we will engage to perform the other.

"As to the distribution of employments, there is neither justice, decency, duty, or moderation, in dictating to the king, how to dispose of every preferment in the state. His majesty has shown a disposition to comply with the desires of his people in the most effectual manner; he has already supplied the principal ministerial posts with men, who have hitherto enjoyed the confidence of the people, and cannot yet have forfeited their good opinion, because, though nominated, they have none of them yet done any single act of office. As to the changes already made, they are as numerous as the importance of the matter, and the nature of the thing can possibly admit so soon, and it would have been more to the credit of the party, if their patience

had extended a little longer than the few days, that have passed since the time of their adjournment. As to the partial distribution of employments to the Whigs, as far as our interest shall hereafter extend, we will use it faithfully to the king and to our country, by recommending such persons, whose principles have been misrepresented, and who are true to his family, let their appellations be what they will. But it must be a work of some time, to remove suspicions inculcated long, and long credited, with regard to a denomination of men, who have formerly been thought not heartily attached to the interest of the prince upon the throne. Some instances of this intention, have been already given in the late removals, and there will be many more; but it must depend upon the prudent conduct of the Tories themselves, wholly to abolish these unhappy distinctions of party." He concluded by requesting them to consider the false step they had already made, and to reflect that this passionate and groundless division, would infallibly give new courage to the party they had just subdued; that it discovered a weakness, of which advantage would be certainly taken; that it must inevitably lessen the power of those who were employed, and, if persisted in, would in a great measure prevent the success of their views, both for the public and their friends."*

When the contest was in reality for power, and only in appearance for the public good, it

* Faction Detected. p. 42.

is not to be supposed that arguments on either side drawn from prudential, disinterested, and patriotic motives, could have the smallest weight. The parties separated with the same virulence as they had met, and only waited for an open rupture, until all the places were disposed of; each flattering himself that he might be included in the proposed arrangement.*

The resentment of the disaffected patriots was still farther aggravated, by the formation of the new treasury board,† announced on the 16th of February, in which only one Tory was included.

With a view to allay these jealousies, the prince of Wales proposed a meeting in his presence, of the chief leaders of the former opposition, particularly Argyle, Chesterfield, Cobham, Gower, and Bathurst. Pulteney came, accompanied by Scarborough, prepared to oppose or to conciliate. The most violent accusations were levelled against him. It was urged, the change of administration ought to be total; the intended alterations were not sufficient; too many of the late minister's friends would remain in power; Sir Robert Walpole would still act

* To this meeting at the Fountain Tavern, Sir Charles Hanbury Williams alludes, with his usual wit and satire, in his ode against the earl of Bath, called The Statesman.

"Then enlarge on his cunning and wit:
"Say, how he harangu'd at the Fountain;
"Say, how the old patriots were bit,
"And a mouse was produc'd by a mountain."

† Lord Wilmington, Sandys, Sir John Rushout, Philip Gibbon, and George Compton.

behind the curtain, and direct the whole machine of government.* Pulteney replied, that these accusations were groundless; for even upon a supposition that the ex-minister should still continue to be a greater personal favourite with the king than any of them, or than all of them together, yet it would not be in his power to distress them, provided they remained united among themselves. "Nothing," he added, "but our own dissensions can hurt us; we have the staff in our own hands, and the changes now to be made, will enable us to effect farther alterations at the end of the session. I have stipulated that the duke of Argyle, lord Cobham, lord Gower, the marquis of Tweedale, the earl of Winchelsea, lord Carteret, and myself, shall be members of the cabinet council, and we shall form so great a majority, that the whole power will be in our hands. We shall besides command the whole boards of treasury and admiralty, and have the appointment of several other considerable places. What then have we to fear? Should we attempt a total change at this period, disorder and confusion must ensue. By the pledges we possess at present, we have ample security for future regulations, and with such a power in our hands, we may command any future alterations."

These conditions being deemed satisfactory, it was then proposed that they should all appear at court together. To this an objection was raised by the duke of Argyle. Alluding to the

* Bishop Newton, p. 31.

promise of a place, which had been made to Sir John Rushout, he said he should not go till he was called, having as good pretensions, and being as worthy of notice as that gentleman. To this petulant remark, Pulteney sarcastically rejoined, "I can understand your speech in no other sense than that your grace wants a place." His resentment was soothed by a declaration that they would not consent to his exclusion from the pending arrangement, and they concurred in a resolution to attend the levee.* Thus the authority of the prince, and the expectations of the Tories, that Sir John Hynde Cotton would, according to promise, be appointed one of the lords of the admiralty, prevented an open rupture.

On the 7th, the prince, whose establishment had been increased to £.100,000 a year, and who was farther gratified with a promise of seats at the admiralty board for lord Baltimore and lord Archibald Hamilton, paid his personal respects to the king; and, on the 18th, the whole party,† who had formed the opposition to the late minister, made their appearance at court. This event was hailed by the Tories as the beginning of a new æra: "Upon this memorable day," observes the author of the Defence of the People, "his majesty for the first time appeared

* Glover, page. 10. These additional anecdotes preserved by Glover, published since the former edition of this work, fully corroborate all the accounts which I received from Dr. Douglas, late bishop of Salisbury, and which I drew from bishop Newton's Narrative.

† Defence of the People.

to be the king of ALL HIS PEOPLE, and had the happiness and glory to see himself in the midst of a more illustrious circle than had ever surrounded any of our sovereigns since queen Elizabeth began to narrow the bottom of government, by persecuting the Puritans."*

On the same day the two houses met, and the writs for the members appointed to the new board of treasury were issued. The Tories and disaffected Whigs did not, however, yet venture to begin a new opposition. Argyle accepted the office of master-general of the ordnance, and a regiment of horse, of which he had been dispossessed. No opposition was made to the motion on the 22d for ordering that a million should be taken from the sinking fund, towards raising a supply; a mode of proceeding for which they had reprobated Walpole with unabating virulence. The house having resolved itself into a committee of supply, Philips, a violent Tory member, moved to defer the committee for the purpose of taking into consideration the state of the nation, but he was only feebly supported. Sir Watkin Williams Wynne, no less vehement on the same side of the question, was the only member who spoke in favour of the motion, and it was dropped without a division.†

At length the new board of admiralty was declared,‡ and Sir John Hynde Cotton was not

* Defence of the People, p. 71. † Chandler.

‡ The earl of Winchelsea, John Cockburne, lord Archibald Hamilton, lord Baltimore, Philip Cavendish, Dr. Lee, John M. Trevor.

included. As all the places were now disposed of, and all expectations annihilated, the Tories and disaffected Whigs openly appeared in battle array against the new ministry. The duke of Argyle, disgusted that the marquis of Tweedale was appointed secretary of state for Scotland, and dissatisfied that a large body of his needy descendants were not provided for, resigned. The prince of Wales soon withdrew his support, and his most confidential servants, particularly Pitt and Lyttleton, violently opposed the new administration.

In this situation of parties, the Tories and disaffected Whigs opposed the re-election of the members who had accepted the places at the board of admiralty. Lord Baltimore was opposed in Surry by the duke of Bedford; Dr. Lee was thrown out at Brackley, by the interest of the duke of Bridgewater; lord Limerick, who was to have been appointed secretary at war, in the place of Sir William Yonge, could not venture to vacate his seat for Tavistock, on the certainty of not being re-chosen, as it was a borough belonging to the duke of Bedford. He obtained a reversion of the place of king's remembrancer in Ireland; and Sir William Yonge, the adherent of Sir Robert Walpole, was permitted to continue secretary at war.

Orford had now succeeded in dividing opposition, and forming an administration on a Whig basis. The firm phalanx of opposition was disunited; Pulteney was duped and deceived by those with whom he had negotiated, and de-

serted even by those whom he had promoted. While he was confined by the sickness and death of his daughter, the other leaders of the opposition in the house of commons, being eager to prove that they could carry a measure without his assistance; lord Limerick moved, on the 9th of March, for a secret committee, to inquire into the administration of Sir Robert Walpole, during the last twenty years. Winchelsea and Carteret, whom Pulteney had particularly favoured, intimated to his friends, without his authority, that it would be agreeable to him if they would not attend; accordingly, the motion being made during his absence, while Sandys was gone to Worcester to be elected, was lost, though by a majority of only 2; 244 against 242.

Pulteney, in several audiences, urged repeatedly to the king, that the Tories were by no means Jacobites, and to use them as Jacobites, was the ready way to make them so; that two-thirds of the nation were Tories, and several of them men of large estates. He even ventured to ask the king why he made himself only the head of a party, when he might be king of the whole nation! "I myself," he added, "am a Whig, my most intimate friends are Whigs. In my opinion, the trunk of the tree in the government should be formed of Whigs, but the Tories may be inoculated or engrafted upon it. The Tories are not masters of calculation, or proficients in the knowledge of languages, and therefore cannot and do not expect the first situations under

government. By conferring, however, a few places at court on some of the most considerable, by constituting others lord lieutenants of the counties, and by distributing some other marks of royal favour, your majesty may disarm the whole party, and prevent their uniting in opposition to government. You may thus abolish all distinctions of parties, and the remainder of your reign will be peaceable and glorious."* But Pulteney was now talking in vain; all his remonstrances were ineffectual; he was no longer the soul of a great party, and lost the personal credit and power which he enjoyed from that situation.

The third great object which Orford had to effect, was his own security, which the temper of parliament, and the popular outcry against him, rendered extremely difficult. But the support of the king, the opposition of the house of peers, the goodness of his cause, and the steady zeal of his friends, finally prevailed. The good sense of the nation was not long to be deluded by vague accusations of pretended patriots.

It is fortunate, however, for the honour of Sir Robert Walpole, that the inquiry into his administration took place; as the ordeal which he underwent on this occasion, was such as could have been passed by few ministers, who had, during so long a period, directed the helm of government, in a great commercial country, divided into parties, and torn by factions.

* Bishop Newton.

The motion of lord Limerick to institute an inquiry into the conduct of Sir Robert Walpole, during the last twenty years, had been thrown out, and the loss of the question had been principally owing to the absence of Pulteney, and to the intimation that he was averse to it. With a view to contradict these reports, which he considered as injurious to his reputation, as if he was desirous of checking an inquiry, lord Limerick, at his request, made a second motion to appoint a secret committee of inquiry into the conduct of the earl of Orford, during the last ten years of his being first commissioner of the treasury, and chancellor and under treasurer of his majesty's exchequer.

It will be unnecessary to enter into a detail of the arguments which were urged on both sides, as well on this as on the former occasion, in which the late minister was as vigorously attacked, as he was ably defended, and in which his third son, Horace Walpole, testified his filial affection, by an animated and manly speech against the motion.

It is sufficient to observe, that to accuse a minister of any specific act of mal-administration, is the privilege of our well-regulated constitution, which no one but a friend to a despotic government, could wish to be removed. But to constitute a *general* inquiry into the conduct of a minister for so long a term as ten years, founded on popular clamours and vague suspicions, without particularizing any act of guilt, and especially for measures which had been legally sanc-

tioned by parliament, seemed as unjust as it was unconstitutional. It required all the powers of Pulteney, who is said to have still preserved "a miraculous influence in the house of commons,"* and all the eloquence of Pitt, who eminently distinguished himself in both these debates, to palliate or justify such a flagrant abuse of parliamentary interference; and it demanded all the accumulated weight of the Tories and disaffected Whigs, to carry it through the house, by a majority of only seven, 252 against 245.

The motion having passed, a committee of secrecy, consisting of twenty-one members, was appointed, and empowered to examine, in the most solemn manner, such persons as they thought proper on the subject matter of their inquiry. Of the twenty-one members† appointed by ballot, all except two were the uniform opponents of the late minister. The disaffected Whigs accused the Tories of having acted falsely in permitting the introduction of Sir Henry Lydal and Talbot, with a view to perplex the business; while the Tories on their side accused Sandys of being rather a spy than an associate, and of rather embarrassing than forwarding the business.‡

* Defence of the People, or Answer to Faction Detected.

† Sir John St. Aubin, Samuel Sandys, Sir John Rushout, George Compton, lord Quarendon, William Noel, Sir John Barnard, lord Limerick, lord Cornbury, Nicholas Fazakerly, Henry Furnese, lord Granard, Cholmondeley, Turner, Edmund Waller, William Pitt, Thomas Prowse, William Bowles, Edward Hooper, Sir John Strange, Sir Henry Lydal, and John Talbot.—Chandler.

‡ Defence of the People, p. 109.

The earl of Orford, however, seems to have formed a more judicious opinion of this circumstance. For being congratulated that two of his friends were appointed members of the secret committee, he replied, "They will become so zealous for the honour of the committee, that they will no longer pay sufficient regard to *mine*."*

Armed with such extensive powers, the committee of secrecy commenced their operations, by choosing lord Limerick chairman. They applied with indefatigable diligence to the inspection of the treasury books and papers; they examined many persons who were supposed to have been the private agents of Sir Robert Walpole, in his schemes of corruption, bribery, and dilapidation of the public revenue.

The expectations of the nation were raised to the greatest height; the measures of the minister who had been held forth as a public delinquent, as having squandered and appropriated the public money, were brought before a tribunal, consisting of persons who were both willing and able to trace his misconduct, and discover his enormities. It was naturally expected that in so long an administration, big with difficulties, and teeming with internal troubles, numerous instances of corrupt influence and notorious malversation would have been discovered; and that his opponents had some foundation for the crimes which they had laid to his charge. But it soon appeared that they had advanced accusa-

* From Lord Orford.

tions which they could not prove; and that the charges urged with such confidence in the forcible language of Pitt, could not be authenticated. "I fear not to declare," observed that eminent orator, with all the baneful spirit of party, "that I expect, in consequence of such inquiry, to find, that our treasure has been exhausted, not to humble our enemies, or to obviate domestic insurrections, not to support our allies, or to suppress our factions; but for purposes which no man who loves his country can think of without indignation, the purchase of votes, the bribing of boroughs, the enriching of hirelings, the multiplying of dependents, and the corruption of parliaments."*

The want of sufficient proofs, drawn from authentic papers, and voluntary evidence, reduced the committee to so great a dilemma, that for the purpose of proving those enormities, which they deemed had been committed, they had recourse to a very extraordinary and unprecedented proposition. For the discoveries which they were able to make were inconsiderable, when compared with the atrocity of the charges; and they attributed the inefficacy of their inquiries to the arts and obstinacy of the ex-minister's friends and dependents.

It is an established maxim in all governments, that secret service money must be employed for the public advantage; and the disposal of that money is, in limited governments like our's, always confided to the king, under the direction

* Chandler's Debates.

and control of his ministers, who are responsible to parliament. Among the ministers, the first lord of the treasury, as having the chief direction of the finances, is principally entrusted with the distribution.

With a view to prove Sir Robert Walpole guilty of abusing or mismanaging this part of the public revenue, they examined some of the inferior agents who must always be employed in that species of negotiation. The sum of £. 95,000, had passed through the hands of Paxton, solicitor to the treasury. Being called upon to give an account of that money, he was first examined about £. 500, which had been paid to one Boteler in 1735, for the purpose of carrying his election for the borough of Wendover. Paxton being repeatedly asked if he had advanced any money on that account, repeatedly refused to answer that question, as it might tend to criminate himself. For this species of contumacy, he was committed to Newgate, by an order of the house. Gwyn Vaughan being examined by the committee, in regard to a practice with which the late minister was charged, of obliging a possessor of a place to pay a certain sum from the profits, to a person recommended by government, followed the example of Paxton, and declined making any reply, as it might affect himself.

Scrope, secretary to the treasury, and member of the house of commons, being next examined in regard to the disposal of £. 1,052,211, which

had, within the term of ten years, been traced into his and Sir Robert Walpole's hands, declined the oath of discovery, avowing that he could not, consistently with his conscience, take a general oath, while particular queries might arise, which he was determined not to answer, and he added, that he could reply to no interrogation, concerning secret service money, without the permission of the king. On being again examined, he acquainted the committee "he had consulted the ablest lawyers and divines, and they had made his scruples stronger; he did not do it to obstruct the committee, but he could not, as an honest man, and with a safe conscience, take the oath. He had laid his case before the king, and was authorized to say, that the disposal of money, issued for secret service, by the nature of it, requires the utmost secrecy, and is accountable to his majesty only; and therefore his majesty could not permit him to disclose any thing on the subject. He hoped he should not incur the displeasure of the committee, for if the oath was confined, he was ready to be examined. Upon this answer, he was no further pressed." *

Several others in the same manner refusing to answer, the committee were perplexed, and confounded between their strong inclination to convict, and the impossibility of effecting their purpose by the common mode of legal, or parliamentary proceeding.

* Tindal, vol. 20. p. 543. Chandler.

They therefore published their celebrated report November 13th,* and moved in the house of commons, for a bill, "to indemnify such persons, as should upon examination, make discoveries, touching the disposition of offices, or any payment or agreement in respect thereof, or concerning other matters belonging to the conduct of Robert earl of Orford."†

Many words are not required to show the fatal tendency of a bill, calculated to suborn witnesses, to multiply accusations, to encourage villains to accuse a person who was innocent, or at least, should be deemed innocent, until he was proved guilty, to bribe men to give evidence to save their own lives and estates; a bill in which the inquiry was uncertain, and the indemnity as uncertain as the discovery which the witnesses might make. For it did not lay down any specific object of which the earl of Orford was supposed guilty, it did not offer the payment of a certain sum of money, or the pardon of any particular crime; but the persons who gave evidence were to be indemnified for *all* the sums which they might lose, and receive a pardon for *all* the crimes which they might disclose, in giving evidence against the earl of Orford. It was holding up the ex-ministers as a public felon, and converting the house of commons into a tribunal of blood.‡

* See the next chapter. † Tindal, vol. 20. p. 544.

‡ The words of the bill are a sufficient justification of these censures, "That all persons who shall truly and faithfully disclose and discover, to the best of their knowledge, remembrance, and be-

Although the passing of this inquisition bill casts a severe reflection on the house of commons, yet it affords some consolation, that it was not carried without a considerable struggle, and by a majority of only twelve, 228 against 216.

The debates in the house of commons, on this important occasion, have never been given to the public; but those which took place when it was discussed in the house of peers are recorded in the contemporary publications. The reader may indulge his curiosity, in the perusal of this debate, which strikingly displays the baneful influence of party spirit. *

He will be shocked at the insinuation of Lord Bathurst, as calculated for the meridian of despotism, "*that the introduction of new methods of prosecution is the natural consequence of new schemes of villany, and new schemes of evasion.*" But he will turn with horror from the malignant comparison of Chesterfield, who endeavoured to prove, that *such an indemnity was not a new thing in our constitution, because rewards were daily offered to highwaymen and murderers, for the discovery of their accomplices.*

He will read, however, with pleasure, the

lief, all such matters and things, as they shall be examined unto, touching or concerning the said inquiry and relative thereunto, shall be, and are thereby indemnified and discharged, of and from all forfeitures, penalties, punishments, disabilities, and incapacities which they shall, or may incur, or become subject to, for or by reason or means of any matter or thing, which they shall so truly and faithfully discover and make known, touching or concerning the said inquiry, and relative thereunto; viz. of all matters relating to the conduct of the earl of Orford, for ten years last past."

* Gentleman's and London Magazines.—Lords' Debates.

manly remark of lord chancellor Hardwicke, "that names will not change the nature of the things to which they are applied." "The bill is calculated," he said, "to make a defence impossible, to deprive innocence of its guard, and to let loose oppression and perjury upon the world. It is a bill to dazzle the wicked with a prospect of security, and to incite them to purchase an indemnity for one crime, by the perpetration of another. It is a bill to confound the notions of right and wrong, to violate the essence of our constitution, and to leave us without any certain security for our property, or rule for our actions."*

It reflects the highest honour on the house of peers, that it was rejected by a much larger majority than even the place and pension bills,† which affords a sufficient answer to those who confidently assert that its rejection was wholly owing to the influence of the crown, in consequence of a compromise with Pulteney, and that the prosecution was only a collusion. I can trace no signs of such a compromise; I observe the secret committee eager to prove the minister culpable. I find Sandys, and the members of the new administration, as violent in their unqualified assertions of his guilt, as the Tories and disaffected Whigs, who were excluded by the

* Lords' Debates, vol. 8. p. 167.

† Place Bill, - - - 81 against 52 majority 29.
Pension Bill, - - 76 - - 46 - - - 30.
Indemnity Bill, - - 109 - - 57 - - - 52.
Lords' Debates.

arrangement of Pulteney. If I compare the 109 peers, who voted against the bill, with the 57 who voted for it, I find the same proportion of men of property, independence, and probity in the one, as in the other list; and on an impartial review of the subject, I cannot consider their rejection of this bill, in any other light than as an act of justice, which did not construe suspicion into a proof of guilt, which set bounds to party spirit and Jacobite prosecution; and I look up with reverence to that branch of our constitution, which more than once has saved this country from the overgrown prerogative of the crown, and from the violence of popular frenzy.

The rejection of the indemnity bill by the house of peers, was received with much dissatisfaction by the inveterate enemies of the ex-minister, and lord Strange moved in the house of commons, "That the lords refusing to concur with the commons of Great Britain, in an indemnification necessary to the effectual carrying on the inquiry, now depending in parliament, was an obstruction to justice, and might prove fatal to the liberties of this nation."* This violent motion was opposed, not only by the friends of the late minister, but even by Pulteney, and the new members of the administration, and by some of the Tories, who declared, that although they wished the bill had passed, yet they could not agree to a resolution which would create a breach between the two houses. It was accordingly thrown out by a majority of 52.

* Tindal, vol. 20. p. 516. Chandler.

The day on which parliament was prorogued, Pulteney was called to the house of peers, by the title of earl of Bath.

Walpole had now the pleasure, if it be any pleasure to a great mind, to see the celebrated commoner, who had driven him from the helm, as much exposed to obloquy, as he himself had ever been, in the plenitude of his power and unpopularity. He saw him lampooned in ballads replete with wit, reviled both by ministerial and opposition writers, his influence sunk so low, that he, who for a few days possessed the whole authority of the crown, was now unable to command for a friend a cornetcy of dragoons, or a lieutenancy of the navy.* In fact, the credit of Pulteney was so much reduced, that on his representing to the duke of Newcastle, that the

* To this decline of his influence, Sir Charles H. Williams alludes in one of his satirical ballads:

"Great earl of Bath your reign is o'er;
The Tories trust your word no more,
The Whigs no longer fear ye;
Your gates are seldom now unbarr'd,
No crowds of coaches fill your yard,
And scarce a soul comes near ye.
"Few now aspire at your good graces,
Scarce any sue to you for places,
Or come with their petition,
To tell how well they have deserv'd,
How long, how steadily they starv'd
For you in opposition;
"Expect to see that tribe no more,
Since all mankind perceive that pow'r
Is lodg'd in other hands.
Sooner to Carteret now they'll go,
Or ev'n (though that's excessive low)
To Wilmington and Sands."

Williams's Poems, p. 43.

king had broken his promise of appointing Sir John Hynde Cotton one of the lords of the admiralty; Newcastle replied, "his majesty has another shop to go to," alluding to the duke of Argyle, who had deserted Pulteney, and joined those who opposed the new administration.*

He saw him reviled, persecuted, and loaded with such improbable accusations, as receiving a peerage and an estate in London from the crown, for screening the minister from public vengeance.

I think it a duty, and feel a satisfaction in being able to rescue the name of Pulteney from indiscriminate censure, and to prove, from the most unequivocal facts, that he has been unjustly accused of acting from base and sordid motives.

In regard to the peerage, he had never concealed his intention of procuring that dignity, for he had been frequently heard to say to his friends, "When I have turned out Sir Robert Walpole, I will retire into that hospital of invalids, the house of peers." But it is no less true, that he had repeatedly declined the honour under his administration. He who had driven out Walpole, who had declined the office of prime minister, who had made lord Wilmington first lord of the treasury, and filled the boards of treasury and admiralty, might easily have claimed for himself a peerage, without terms. The truth is, that Pulteney delayed accepting

* From the bishop of Salisbury.

the title, until he had obtained the privy seal for the earl of Gower, who was obnoxious to the ministry; while lord Hervey, who held that distinguished office, was supported with all the influence of the king. In fact, he was so mortified by repeated instances of ill treatment, as to meditate a renewal of his opposition. He is even said to have received his new dignity with disgust, and to have trampled the patent of peerage under his feet.*

The second accusation against Pulteney, that for the purpose of screening the minister from public vengeance, he received from the crown a grant of a considerable estate in Piccadilly, is also no less unfounded. For this very accusation had been advanced in 1731, and was then amply refuted by Pulteney himself.† He

* From lord Orford.

† It is thus stated by the author of a review of Mr. Pulteney's conduct:

"Pulteney hoped that by giving up all lucrative employments, and barely accepting a title, he had silenced obloquy and removed suspicion. But the avarice of his temper was so well and universally understood, that it was vulgarly supposed he had accepted large sums for making the compromise between the crown and the leaders of the opposition; this was indeed looked upon to be equally an idle or groundless surmise. However, *it is very certain* that a great part of Piccadilly, which produced a very large income, and which *till that time*, had belonged to the crown, became *all of a sudden* the property of Mr. Pulteney." To this imputation, Pulteney himself replied:

"It is true, indeed, that this gentleman hath a very large estate, which hath been in his family for many generations. Some part of his estate was held by a lease from the crown, of which there was a term of ninety-nine years to come, after a term that was then in being. His grandfather left his estate in trustees, to be sold for the purchase of other lands of inheritance. Upon this occasion, he applied to the crown to buy off the inheritance, not as a favour, but as

showed that the estate in question was a family estate of about £.1,200 or £.1,300 a year, held by a lease of ninety-nine years from the crown, and that he purchased the perpetuity at a fair price.

This statement of the transaction does not, however solely rest on Pulteney's own assertion; it is confirmed by the act of parliament itself, which passed on the 14th of February 1720-1, and also from a letter* from the duke of Montagu to Sir Robert Walpole, requesting him to obtain from George the Second, the permission of purchasing certain estates in reversion. As a foundation for the grant, he observes his late majesty, George the First, had, *in the 8th year of his reign, granted to Mr. Pulteney the inheritance of several lands and tenements in St. James's, in reversion of above 99 years then in being.*

It is but justice to the memory of Pulteney, who has been so much calumniated for this part of his political conduct, to add his own apology,

a fair purchaser, and was at the expense of an act of parliament to obtain it. He paid more than Sir Isaac Newton, or any other calculator, computes the value of such a purchase to be; for it cost him altogether, with charges, a year's purchase to make it inheritance: and I believe no body will pretend to argue that an inheritance, after a term of above one hundred years to come, is worth one year's purchase, nor would this gentleman have given one single shilling for it, if it had not been to get his estate out of trustees hands.

"This is the fact; and what was the value of the estate thus purchased? Not above twelve or thirteen hundred pounds a year; which is but a small part of this gentleman's estate, even according to your own calculation; most of which was land of inheritance before."

* Walpole Papers.

as given by himself, in a letter, written to bishop Newton.* "In every thing I did, when the change was made, I know I acted honestly, I am sure I acted disinterestedly, and if I did not do what the world may call wisely, it was the fault of a few friends who betrayed me, of the court that meant to weaken me, and of many others who too hastily mistrusted me, and turned their backs upon me. But time (as I always thought it would) has cleared up all these points; and I have the satisfaction to imagine that the king now wishes he had given into my schemes; the friends who betrayed me are sensible of, and sorry for their folly; and they who opposed me, though some of them have since got power into their own hands, are sensible how mean a figure they make with it, and how unequal they are to the posts they have. Certain it is, that no one can be so capable of writing history, as he who has been principally concerned in the great transactions; and if ever it should be necessary to inform the world (which I believe it will not) of the history of the late change, no one can to be sure do it, or at least furnish materials for doing it, so well as myself, for I may truly say, *Pars magna fui;* and I do not apprehend, nor can I recollect one single fact, no not one circumstance in the whole affair, that it can be necessary to suppress or disguise. If avarice, ambition, or the desire of power had influenced me, why did I not take (and no one can deny but I might have had) the greatest post in the

* August 15, 1745. Life of Bishop Newton.

kingdom? But I contented myself with the honest pride of having subdued the great author of corruption, retired with a peerage, which I had three times at different periods of my life refused; and left the government to be conducted by those who had more inclination than I had to be concerned in it. I should have been happy, if I could have united an administration capable of carrying on the government with ability, economy, and honour."

A friend of Pulteney has also given a full explanation of his conduct, and stated the insuperable difficulties which he had to encounter from the discordant views of that heterogeneous opposition, which, with all his influence and abilities, he could not unite in sentiment, though he had succeeded in uniting them for the purpose of forming a consistent plan of attack.

"Like an opposition in parliament, carried on against an overgrown minister, all sorts of parties and connexions, all sorts of disagreeing and contradictory interests, join against him, at first, as a common enemy, and tolerable unanimity is preserved amongst them, so long as the fate of this parliamentary war continues in suspense. But when once they have driven him to the wall, and think themselves sure of victory, the jealousies and suspicions, which while the contest depended had been stifled, break out; every one, who shared in the fatigue, expects to share in the spoils, separate interests counteract each other, separate negotiations are set on foot, till at last, by untimely and unnecessary

division, they lose the fruits of their victory, and the object of the common resentment is able to make terms for himself."*

* To this passage the author subjoined a note: "The true history of the transaction here alluded to, may possibly, some time or other appear; though as yet, we are persuaded, the world knows very little of it." Letter to two Great Men, 1760, p. 35. This excellent pamphlet was written by Dr. Douglas, now bishop of Salisbury, who in explanation, assured me it was the intention of lord Bath, to have arranged, from his own recollection and papers, a history of the events which accompanied and followed the resignation of Sir Robert Walpole. But he afterwards changed his mind, and said he would leave this task to Dr. Douglas, who should draw up an account after his death, and pointed to several papers which would be of use to him. From a knowledge of these facts, the public naturally formed the highest expectations, and bishop Newton justly observes, "As Dr. Pearce had some knowledge of these and other transactions, so Dr. Douglas, by conversing several years almost daily with lord Bath, had frequent opportunities of informing himself of the truth of many particulars, and having collected sufficient materials for the purpose, is well qualified to draw the just character, and to complete the history of his noble patron, a debt which he owes to his memory, and it is hoped will one time or other fully discharge, so that conformably to the rule, in the mouth of two or three witnesses, every word may be established."

On the death, however, of lord Bath, general Pulteney destroyed all his papers, and the world has to regret that the learned prelate was, by this unfortunate circumstance, prevented from accomplishing a design, for which he alone could be sufficiently qualified.

CHAPTER 61.

1742.

Examination of the Report of the Secret Committee—Heads of Accusation urged against Sir Robert Walpole—Undue Influence in Elections—Grants of fraudulent Contracts.—Peculation, and Profusion in the Expenditure of the Money for Secret Service—His private Fortune, pecuniary Acquirements, and the State of his Affairs at his Death.

THE charges against the ex-minister, which result from the report of the secret committee, may be reduced to three principal heads:

1. Undue influence in elections:
2. Granting fraudulent contracts:
3. Peculation, and profusion in the expenditure of secret service money.

The first charge of undue influence in elections, is confined principally to the offer of a place of collector of the port of Weymouth to the mayor, if he would use his influence in obtaining the nomination of a returning officer; the promise of a living to the brother-in-law of the mayor for the same purpose; the removal of some revenue officers, who refused to give their votes for the ministerial candidate, and the distribution of some trifling sums for borough

prosecutions and suits. Such petty abuses of power, which were swelled in the report* into almost capital charges, were so much below the dignity of the house, as to throw ridicule on their proceedings, and to excite the contempt of the public.

The second charge of granting fraudulent contracts, is reduced to a *single* contract, given to Peter Burrel and John Bristow, two members of the house of commons for furnishing money at Jamaica, towards the payment of the British troops; into which a friend of Mr. Hanbury Williams was admitted by his recommendation, and by which the contractors gained £.14 3*s.* 2 ½*d.* per cent.† But even admitting the truth

* "The contest is plain and visible; it is: Whether the commons shall retain the third state in their own hands, whilst this whole dispute is carried on at the expense of the people; but, on the other side of the minister, out of the money granted to support and secure the constitutional independency of the three branches of the legislature.

"This method of corruption is as sure, and therefore your committee apprehend, as criminal a way of subverting the constitution as by an armed force; it is a crime productive of a total destruction of the very being of this government, and is so high and unnatural, that nothing but the powers of parliament can reach it; and as it can never meet with parliamentary animadversion, but when it is unsuccessful, it must seek for its security in the extent and efficacy of the mischief it produces; and therefore your committee apprehend it is the more necessary for your consideration, while its want of success yet leaves an opportunity to preserve and maintain your independency for the future." Report of the Committee of Secrecy, p. 24.

† "Your committee have been obliged to dwell the longer upon this contract, because the whole behaviour of the earl of Orford, who had the sole direction of it, seems so extraordinary, that they fear this part of the report would want credit, if they had not descended into the most minute parts of it.

of the statement, the bargain, when first made, could not be unfavourable to the public. Because, as appears upon the report, Burrel would not, on account of the risk, accept the whole contract, but admitted Bristow as his partner, and even offered a part of his share to his brothers, and two other gentlemen; all of whom declined for the same reason.

The next charge, that of peculation, and extravagance in the expenditure of the public money, is of a far more serious nature.

In order to affix the stigma of peculation on Sir Robert Walpole, it was necessary to show,

"Here they find a contract entered into upon the good faith of the proposers only, with an ignorance of the value of the exchange, whether real or affected does not appear to your committee; and that defect so far from being endeavoured to be supplied by admitting proposals, or information from any other merchants, that it seemed a determined point to shut it out, even where it seemed to obtrude itself upon him from the very offices subject to his inspection.

"But as if this injury to the troops and injustice to the nation had been too little, he rendered this contract more advantageous to the contractors, than their most sanguine expectation originally suggested to them.

"For though by the terms of the contract, the public was only to advance £.27,000 in money, yet we find the further sum of £.42,000 advanced to them before the arrival of the troops in America.

"And your committee observe, that the shares of the profits of this contract were dealt out to the deputy of the pay office and to a friend of the paymaster of the marines, at the request of the said paymaster, without any advance of money, or trouble on their part; and it is very remarkable, that these shares were confined to the sums issued from their respective offices.

"And here your Committee must observe, from the whole course of this proceeding, that neither the interest of the soldier, nor the public, seemed to have been the object of the earl of Orford's attention." Report of the Committee of Secrecy, p. 13.

that the sums employed for secret service, during the last ten years of his administration, were much greater than the sums expended on the same occasion during an equal number of years, in any of the preceding reigns; and in making this comparative statement, the committee appear to realize the axiom, that "he who proves too much proves nothing." "The issuing," observes the committee, "such an immense part of the money, given for the support of the civil government, to these particular uses, during a time of profound tranquillity till the late rupture with Spain, greatly alarmed your committee, and put them upon examining what sums had been issued for the same services, in a period for the like number of years. And your committee beg leave to represent to you, that exorbitant as this sum may seem, they would have suppressed this part of their report, if by the comparison, they had entered upon, they could any ways have reconciled their silence upon this head, to their duty in this house and the nation; and your committee hope, that the period they have pitched upon, will evince the truth of this intention, as it comprehends a general and most expensive war abroad, a demise of the crown, the happy establishment of the present royal family upon the throne, and an open and dangerous rebellion at home. In short, every event that can happen to justify extraordinary expenses in carrying on the business of government. And it is not easy to express the surprise of your committee, when

they found by the account laid before them, which is annexed (N° 11), that from the 1st day of August 1707, to the 1st day of August 1717, there was issued under the aforesaid heads, no more than the sum of £.337,960 4*s.* 5½*d.*"

The statement brought forward with such affected candour and moderation, is partial and inaccurate.

The partiality will appear from commencing the inquiry into the expenditure in 1707. For the adoption of this year, there seems no particular reason, excepting, that had they begun with the years immediately preceding, the secret service money would have been considerably larger. For in 1707, the union with Scotland was effected; and it is a well known fact, that large sums * of money were remitted, in 1705 and 1706, to Scotland, for the purpose of purchasing the consent, or silencing the opposition of the refractory natives, who vehemently resisted the establishment of the Union.

Another proof of partiality is no less evident from closing their comparative statement with August 1717; at the time when the large pension granted to the abbot du Bois, the complicated negotiations for the quadruple alliance, and the necessity of corrupting the senate of Sweden, on the death of Charles the Twelfth, and many domestic particulars, which rendered the expenses of Sunderland's administration

* At one draft £.20,000 was sent to the Scottish Treasury for that purpose. Smollett, vol. 2. p. 93.

peculiarly heavy, must have increased the total amount of secret service money during the years which immediately followed 1717.

Another proof of partiality appears from confining their statement to only one term; for had they acted on the common principles of justice, they ought to have compared the secret expenditure, from 1731 to 1741, with that of several terms of ten years, from the restoration to the year 1731. Had they only selected the ten first years of queen Anne, from 1702 to 1712, or the first ten years of George the First from 1714 to 1724, the average amount of the sums expended in secret service would have been considerably swelled; and perhaps to as large, if not to a larger amount, than those disbursed on the same occasion from 1731 to 1741. Had they only consulted and compared their own account of the three years, from August 1717 to August 1720, they might have found that during that period the expenditure for secret service, special service, and to reimburse expenses, amounted to £.228,000; but they purposely omitted this just and candid method of proceeding, because Sir Robert Walpole was at that time in opposition, and had no share in the distribution. Had they carefully consulted the treasury books for the four succeeding years, they would have found £.458,000 was expended on the same account.* Had they carried their comparative statement still farther, they would have found

* Note in Sir Robert Walpole's hand-writing, at the end of an abstract of the civil list, made in 1729.

that, in 1725, the year in which the Hanover treaty was concluded, the secret service money, expended between the 1st of May and the 4th of March, amounted to £.218,132.* But such an inquiry was not conformable to their views; which were, to diminish the amount of the sums expended before the year 1731, that those disbursed during the last ten years of Walpole's administration might appear enormously large.

In the second place, the statement of the committee is not a full and exact account of *all* the sums employed in secret service money from 1707 to 1717. For half of the term specified in the comparative statement, was a time of war, when an extraordinary† allowance of £.10,000 per annum is granted for procuring secret intelligence, and 2½ per cent. deducted from the pay of all the foreign forces in the service of Great Britain, which, in five years, amounted to £.178,802 14*s.* was principally employed for the same purpose.‡ It follows, therefore, that no just medium of comparison can be drawn from the money employed for secret service, in time of war and in time of peace; because in time of peace, expenses of this nature have no established provision, whereas in time of war extraordinary allowances are appropriated for that purpose.

* An Account of bounties, secret services, and other payments in the nature of secret service, made between the 1st of May 1725, and the 4th of March following. In the Orford Papers.

† Faction Detected, p. 140.

‡ Report of the Commissioners, in 1712.

In addition to these extraordinary allowances, must likewise be joined a part of the civil list debt of £.500,000, which was paid by parliament in 1713, and of 400,000, which the queen owed at her demise.

I have no particular documents which enable me to prove *unquestionably*, that *all* the sums expended for secret service, during the three first years of George the First, ending in August 1717 are not specified. But I have reason to assert, with full confidence, that it was so; for it is more than probable, that part of the debt of £.800,000 on the civil list which was liquidated in 1720 and 1721, was contracted before August 1717. For that a part of the debt contracted by the civil list, was always supposed to have been expended in secret service money, is proved from the motion made by Pulteney in the house of commons, in 1725, on the proposal to pay the debt on the civil list, to address the king for an account of all monies which had been issued and paid to any person or persons on account, for the privy purse, *secret service*, pensions, *bounties*, or any sum or sums of money to any person or persons *without account* from March 25, 1721, to March 21, 1725.

From these remarks the fallacy of the observation will sufficiently appear, "that the sums expended on these services during the last ten years amount to *near five times* as *much* as was expended in the ten years ending in August 1717; and that the two remarkable years 1733 and 1734, amount to £.312,128 19*s*. 7*d*. being

considerably more than the *total* of the whole ten years, from 1707 to 1717."

Nor can the injustice of the committee be sufficiently reprobated for selecting, as a matter of animadversion, what ought to have been a subject of praise; the two remarkable years 1733 and 1734, in which commenced those complicated negotiations, that succeeded the death of Augustus king of Poland, when the sum of £.312,128 19*s.* 7*d.* for secret service, which they malignantly held forth to public censure, was well expended for procuring that secret intelligence, and for gaining those ministers abroad which prevented a war with France and Spain, that would have added several millions to the national debt.

Having thus endeavoured to show that the conduct of the committee in comparing the secret expenditure, during the last ten years of Sir Robert Walpole's administration, with the ten years from 1707 to 1717, was partial and fallacious, I shall next examine the account itself; and shall endeavour to prove that their statement was equally unjust. The report classes secret expenditure under two principal heads. The first relates to the secret service money, of which the destination was not, and could not be specified, because it was expended for the secret purposes of government. It amounts to little more than the half, or £.786,355 17*s.* 4*d.* The second comprises that money, the distribution of which is specified, and which is divided into special service, amounting to

£. 272,504 0*s.* 8*d.* and to reimburse expenses, amounting to £. 205,390 17*s.* 10*d.* They likewise added other articles, £. 66,000 for the secretaries of state, £. 68,800 upon account to the solicitor of the treasury, and £. 50,077 18*s.* to authors and printers. These totals with a few other small articles, amount to £. 1,440,128, which is stated to be the expense of the civil government in secret service money, during the space of ten years.

But although the report then continues by endeavouring to prove, that the money, issued under the three heads of secret service, special service, and to reimburse expenses, was understood to mean one and the same thing; and though they show that, according to the forms and accounts of the treasury, they are usually comprised under the same head; "yet who does not perceive a very wide difference between secret services, and the other two articles of special service, and the reimbursement of expenses, although it is probable, that some part of the money, under these two heads, has been really applied that way? Yet very great sums must have been issued under these titles, to purposes very different from those which ought to have given so much alarm to the public."* And it is to be observed, that till the passing of Burke's bill, all treasury pensions were charged to the secret service.

As to the other three articles, viz. That of the solicitor of the treasury, that of the allowance of £. 3,000 per annum to each of the secre-

* Faction Detected.

taries of state, and that of the money issued to authors and printers, it is impossible, with any candour, to bring them into the charge of the secret service.

The first sum, to the solicitor, is given always upon account, viz. for crown prosecutions, and other necessary, obvious, and warrantable purposes of government, of which the committee themselves were so well aware, that they deducted that sum from the grand total.

The second sum, which regards the secretaries of state, stands justly exceptionable in this comparison, because it was made a distinct article from that of secret service in all times, and is particularly specified as such in the statement of the annual expenditure before the Revolution, being not included in the annual sum of £.89,968 8*s.* 2½*d.* to which the annual average of the sums employed in secret service then amounted.

In regard to the charge, that £.50,077 18*s.* was paid to authors and printers of newspapers, such as Free Britons, Daily Courants, Corncutters' Journals, Gazetteers, and other political papers, between February 10, 1731, and February 10, 1741, it may be sufficient to observe, with the author of "Faction Detected," that it is a matter rather to be laughed at, than considered seriously.* The gross amount of £.50,077 18*s.* seems a large sum, but if divided by 10, the number of years, is reduced to only £.5,007 15*s.* 9*d.* per annum, a sum too trifling to deserve notice.

* Faction Detected, p. 187.

If this reasoning is just, and these calculations accurate, we must deduct from £. 1,453,400, the sum of £. 662,781, or the total employed in special service, and to reimburse expenses, together with the three articles for the secretaries of state, the solicitor of the treasury, and the authors and printers; and the remainder, £. 790,619, will be the whole disbursement for secret service from 1731 to 1741. This total upon a medium of ten years, is only £. 79,061 18*s*, per annum; a much less sum than was expended on the same occasion, during a similar term of years before the Revolution.* And even if the sums for special service, and to reimburse expenses, should be included, the amount will then be £. 1,264,250 disbursed in ten years, or £. 126,425 per annum, which certainly cannot be considered as an unreasonable sum for keeping the nation in tranquillity at home, and peace abroad, during a period of very intricate negotiation, conciliating foreign courts, and procuring intelligence, in bounties, pensions during pleasure, reimbursement of expenses, extraordinaries to foreign ministers, presents and contingencies at home. And if due consideration be had to the difference of times of war and peace, to the decrease in the value of money, and to the difficulty of procuring exact intelligence, this sum will not appear comparatively larger than the secret service money expended in the reigns of William, Anne, and George the First. It is rather an object of wonder how so much could be effected with this money; for no minister since

* Faction Detected, p. 134.

Walsingham, ever procured such extensive and accurate intelligence as Sir Robert Walpole.

On reviewing these observations, we may venture to draw these conclusions. No dependence can be had on the statement of the report; it being unjust, partial, and fallacious; it fully vindicates the character of the minister from any charge of peculation, because it shows, that notwithstanding his unpopularity, and the eagerness with which his enemies endeavoured to criminate him, no guilt could be proved. The members of the committee, except two, were his enemies; they were inflamed by party, and goaded by personal antipathy; and therefore some apology may be made for them, if under the impression of such sentiments, they gave erroneous statements. But what apology can be made for those compilers of our history, who, either ignorant of the true state of the question, or wishing to mislead the reader, have exaggerated even the accounts in the report, and do not blush to sully the pages of history by asserting, that the enormous sum of £. 1,453,400 was employed in secret service money, when even the report makes a different statement, and when the fallacy of such a statement is unquestionably proved by the author of Faction Detected, which excellent performance they ought to have studied before they made such unqualified assertions.

There yet remains one article, too important to be omitted, which proves the malignity or ignorance of the committee.

"We find, moreover, that two days before he

resigned, viz. Feb. 9th, £. 17,461 was paid into his hands by virtue of three warrants, signed but the same day, which were pawned with the bank officer, in order to raise the sum before they had passed through the usual forms of the exchequer, and till money came into that office, on account of the civil list, to redeem them."

This statement carries an appearance of great ignorance in the committee, of the circumstances attending issues of money from the exchequer, or it is an artful colouring of a very common transaction in order to aggravate the supposed misconduct of Sir Robert Walpole, for the purpose of misleading the judgment of the public.

The commissioners of the treasury, at all times, have been in the practice of signing orders for the issue of money from the exchequer, as well out of the supplies, as out of the civil list, previous to the actual receipt at the exchequer, of the several heads of revenue, out of which such orders are thereafter to be discharged.*

This usage is perfectly correct, and really necessary, because it enables the payment to be made to the party immediately after the future, or next receipt at the exchequer, which payment, but for this practice, must necessarily meet with great delay, from the time unavoidably employed in drawing orders at the exchequer, and transmitting them for signatures and entry at the treasury.

Monies are very frequently wanted for pres-

* For the answer to this article I am indebted to Edward Roberts, esquire, deputy to the clerk of the pells.

sing services, which require immediate payment, and various means have been devised for that purpose, long before the revenue, out of which those services are bound to be discharged, has found its way into the receipt of exchequer.

The legislature annually enables the minister to anticipate, by exchequer bills, the issues intended to be made out of the land and malt taxes, and the surplus of the consolidated fund.

As the civil list arises from a weekly produce, comparatively small, it must sometimes happen that urgent and unforeseen demands, will unavoidably compel the minister, or the creditor, to anticipate the sum required, by private means, until it can be regularly discharged, by due course, from the exchequer.

I take for granted that from the 8th to the 10th of February, 1741-2, there was, as has often happened, but little money remaining in the exchequer, applicable to the uses of the civil government, and that the sum of £. 17,461, was immediately wanted, by Sir Robert Walpole, for services which his majesty must certainly have approved because he signed three separate warrants for the issue, as he was entitled by his prerogative to do, and he must also have given receipts to their amount.

These warrants are said to have been *pawned* to the bank officer, in order to raise the sum before they had passed through the usual forms, and till money came into that office, on account of the civil list, to redeem them. And here lies the whole gist of this charge.

Not to dwell on the ill-natured expression of *pawned*, so evidently introduced to heighten the accusation, or on the good nature of the bank officer, who certainly had no power nor means to accommodate the parties, without the specific and express directions of his superiors, the bank directors then in waiting; what is the fact, but simply this? that a sum of money required for his majesty's service on the 9th of February, and certain of being paid at the exchequer on the 11th, was advanced by the Bank of England on the undeniable security of the king's sign manual, the warrant of the commissioners of the treasury, and an exchequer order; the first and last of these instruments having been regularly countersigned by the commissioners of the treasury also.

Nor could any apprehensions be entertained that after the minister's removal the payment could be stopped by those who were to succeed him, they having the power of confirming such issues as their predecessors had directed, but not of annulling them.

Although these sums were procured from the bank, they might have been advanced by a banker, or any other person to whom Mr. Scrope or Mr. Stanhope might have thought proper to apply; the transaction being most undoubtedly a private accommodation, and in no respect of an official or public nature.

The ex-minister undertook to draw up an answer to the report of the secret committee, and made some progress in the work; but he relinquished the business on a conviction, that the

answer must be either materially defective, or he must have related many things highly improper to be exposed to the public.* Among the Walpole papers is a rough draught in his own hand-writing, which appears to have been the commencement of this vindication. It states in a very perspicuous manner the mode of issuing and receiving money at the exchequer, and proves undeniably that a minister could never appropriate to his own use any part of the secret service money, as the rules and forms which constitute the law of the exchequer, render it almost impossible to defraud or misapply any part of the public treasure. Although this document is incomplete, yet it appears too curious a paper to be withheld from the public. It is therefore inserted in the Correspondence.

Before I close this review of the report, it will not be improper to make a few observations on the rumours industriously circulated that Sir Robert Walpole gained *enormous* riches from the *plunder* of the public.

The current opinion of his vast wealth was, in some degree, sanctioned by his profuse style of living, and the large sums which he expended at Houghton, in buildings, and purchases, which could not amount to less than £.200,000, and to which it was said the income of his estate, and the known salary of his *visible* employments were manifestly inadequate.†

* Etough, from Sir Robert Walpole.

† The confidence and rancour with which these charges were brought forward and supported, will appear from the following extracts, written at different periods:—

"With what face can he say that the minister's estate is no way

This heinous charge will be best answered by a plain statement of his private property, pecuniary acquirements, and the situation of his affairs at his death.

exorbitant, when every body knows he has amassed immense riches, not in the *service of the crown*, but by *jobs, secret service*, the sale of honours, places, pensions, and bargains, made in more places than *Exchange Alley*, by which thousands of families have been reduced to *beggary*."—Examiner, in answer to the Free Briton, July 1, 1731, p. 27.

"That he is the master of the national treasure is evident from his profusion, profusion to which no fund but the exchequer can be sufficient, and of which the income of his estate, and the known salaries of his visible employments, are not equal to the tenth part. His conduct has, indeed, in this respect, been such, that he seems to have thought his triumph not compleat, unless he showed how little he regarded detection, and how much he despised the resentment of the nation. For this reason he has pleased himself with erecting palaces and extending parks, planting gardens in places to which the very earth was to be transported in carriages, and embracing cascades and fountains whose water was only to be obtained by aqueducts and machines, and imitating the extravagance of oriental monarchs, at the expense of a free people, whom he has at once impoverished and betrayed." Pulteney's speech for his removal, 1741-2.—Gentleman's Magazine for 1743, p. 175.

1740-1.—"Some people refine so much as to think Sir Robert will be glad to make himself sure of his *great fortune*, and quit, if he can have terms that can secure." "But if this wonderful thing (the resignation) should be brought about, Sir Robert will still be behind the curtain, with an immense estate, and make it very uneasy to any minister."—Duchess of Marlborough's Opinions, p. 109. On this subject the editor justly observes, "The *vast wealth* of Sir Robert Walpole was, I remember the cry of the day; and it seemed as if he had purchased most of the county of Norfolk, and possessed one-half, at least, of the stock of the bank of England. He himself said, in a familiar way, "People call me rich, but my brother will *cut up* better."

"Taken up near Arlington-street, a small memorandum book (supposed to be lost by a gentleman who is packing up his awls) consisting of several articles, particularly the following ones:—Settled on my eldest son, upon his marriage £. 7,000 per annum. Item—Expended on my house in N———, and in pictures £. 150,000. Item—On plate and jewels, very proper for conceal-

In the first chapter of these Memoirs, I have shown, from undoubted documents, that his family estate, to which he succeeded in 1700, amounted to £.2,169 a year, and that it had been relieved from embarrassments by his wife's fortune. His generous temper, and liberality in promoting the Hanover succession, appear to have involved him in his early days in some difficulties, from which he was afterwards relieved by the emoluments of the offices which he held under the Whig administration in the reign of queen Anne, and while paymaster general of the forces in the reign of George the First. But he greatly augmented his fortune by disposing of South Sea stock. He was, however, principally indebted for this acquisition to his own sagacity, and to the judgment and intelligence of his agents, Jacombe and Gibson; for he was so far from being entrusted with the secrets of the managers, that he was execrated by them for having uniformly opposed the project, and favoured the proposal of the bank. His good fortune, however, was still greater than his own discernment or the intelligence of his agents, for he narrowly

ment, in case of an im————t, £.160,000. Item—In house keeping, for six years past, at a moderate computation, £.150,000. Item.—Remitted at several times, within these twelve months last past, to the banks of Amsterdam, Venice, and Genoa, £.400,000; with many other particulars, too tedious here to relate. If the gentleman who lost it, will please to apply himself to Caleb D'Anvers, of Gray's Inn, Esq., the said memorandum book shall be restored gratis."—Advertisement in the Craftsman of November 28, 1730.

"Sir Robert is gone to day to his country-seat, *loaded with the spoils* and the hatred of the public." Chesterfield's Letters to his Son.

escaped being a great sufferer in the last subscription, by the precipitate fall of the stock. Some orders which he had sent from Houghton, by Sir Harry Bedingfield, together with a list of his friends who wished to be subscribers, came too late to be executed; and the delay prevented his participating in the general calamity.*

This addition so considerably increased his revenue as sufficiently to account for his expense in building, improving, and purchasing at Houghton, which he commenced in the following year, as well as for the acquisition of that noble collection of pictures which cost him £.40,000, and which sold for nearly double the original price.†

During his continuance in office, he provided

* Jacombe to Walpole, Aug. 27, 1720. Orford Papers.

Walpole was not only himself a considerable gainer by disposing of his property in the South Sea stock, but he was also the cause that the earl of Pembroke derived the same advantage. That nobleman having requested his advice, as a person well versed in affairs of finance, whether he should sell out a large sum, or wait till another opportunity? Walpole answered, "I will only acquaint you with what I have done myself; I have just sold out at £.1,000 per cent., and I am fully satisfied." The earl of Pembroke said nothing, and retired. Some years afterwards there arrived at Houghton, a fine bronze cast of the celebrated statue of the Gladiator at Rome. It was a present from lord Pembroke, as a testimony of gratitude for this advice, which he had followed, and by which he had secured a very large part of his property.

Mrs. Walpole, however, did not pay so much regard to the opinion of her husband, for she was so much infected with the general frenzy, that in opposition to his repeated advice, she retained a sum of money, which she possessed in her own right, in the South Sea funds, and suffered, by her obstinacy, in common with the other losers. These anecdotes were communicated by lord Orford.

† The dearest picture in his collection, the "Doctors," by Guido, did not cost more than £.630.

for his family by lucrative offices for life.* Thus he was enabled to expend his private fortune, considerably increased by the rise of landed pro-

* Places of trust and profit held by Sir Robert Walpole:

June, 1705. One of the council to the lord high admiral.
1708. Secretary at war.
Jan. 21. Treasurer to the navy.
Oct. 5, 1714. Paymaster of the forces.
Oct. 11, 1715. First lord commissioner of the treasury, chancellor, and under treasurer of the exchequer.
June 11, 1720. Paymaster of the forces.
April 3, 1721. First lord commissioner of the treasury.
May 29, 1723. Secretary of state, during the king's absence.
May 7, 1740. Joint ranger of Richmond park.

Places held by or for the family of Sir Robert Walpole:

1721. Collector of the port of London, by Henry Hare and Robert Mann, during the lives of Robert Walpole, junior, and E. Walpole, junior, esquires, sons of Sir Robert Walpole. The reversion of this place was granted on the 28th June, 1716, and came into possession in 1721. It was held by deed of trust, at the disposal of Sir Robert Walpole, 2,000*l.* per ann.

April 5, 1721. Robert Walpole, junior, clerk of the pells, 3,000 per ann.

July 21, 1725. Robert lord Walpole, ranger of Richmond Park.

Nov. 17, 1727. E. Walpole, clerk of the pleas in the court of exchequer, 400*l.* per ann.; secretary to the treasury; and secretary to the duke of Devonshire, as lord lieutenant.

Feb. 4, 1737. H. Walpole, junior, usher of the receipt of the exchequer, 2,000*l.* per ann.

Nov. 1, 1738. H. Walpole, junior, clerk or keeper of the foreign estreats; and, Nov. 9, 1738, comptroller of the great roll, 500*l.* per ann.

May 9, 1739. Robert lord Walpole, auditor of the exchequer, 7,000*l.* per ann.

Edward Walpole, clerk of the pells, on the surrender of Robert lord Walpole.

The fortune of Edward Walpole was only 6,000*l.* which he never received; that of his son Horace 4,000*l.*, which was not paid till forty years after the death of his father. The late lord Orford also assured me, that he never received more than 200*l.* from his father.

perty,* and his ministerial emoluments, in that profuse style of living which incurred such unqualified censure.

These details of the estate and property of Sir Robert Walpole, cannot be deemed superfluous, when it is considered that he has been represented as a needy adventurer; that he was accused of having squandered and appropriated the public money; an accusation which was advanced without proof, believed without conviction, and is still credited by many who take rumours for facts, and give unlimited faith to the rancorous assertions of party.

* The rental of his family estate, which in 1700 amounted to 2,160*l.* a year, could not be less at his resignation than between 4 and 5,000*l.* a year.

CHAPTER 62.

1743—1745.

Renewal of the parliamentary Attack on Lord Orford—Defeated—Consulted by the King—His Influence in ministerial Arrangements—Exerts himself for the Continuance of Hanoverian Troops in the British Pay—His Speech in the House of Lords—Goes to Houghton—Returns to London at the King's Request—Illness—Death.

THE indemnity bill being rejected, the ex-minister retired to Houghton, and did not return to London till the next session of parliament, in the public business of which he took no active share.

Soon after his return to London, he experienced the inveteracy of those opponents who had not been gratified with places in the new arrangements.

On the 1st of December 1743, Waller revived the motion for appointing a committee to inquire into the conduct of Robert earl of Orford, during the last ten years of his being first commissioner of the treasury, and chancellor and under treasurer of the exchequer. He was seconded by Sir Watkin Williams Wynne. Although it is said that a debate took place on the

subject, I cannot find any account of it in the periodical publications of the times, which plainly indicates that the clamours raised against the ex-minister no longer engaged the popular attention. A contemporary historian only observes on this occasion, "this motion was plainly calculated to render the opposers of it odious; but the aim was in a great measure lost. The sum of the inquiry into the earl's domestic management, had fallen far short of the public expectation, and the parliament was possessed of all the papers that could give the necessary lights for an inquiry into his foreign conduct. The motion, therefore, was treated as tending to divert the attention of the house from the great affairs of government, and upon a division, was rejected by 253 against 186."*

The ex-minister seems to have felt these repeated aggressions with offended sensibility, and just indignation. In a fragment which formed part of an intended vindication of his conduct, with respect to the charge of peculation, he thus animadverts on this unrelenting spirit:

"What then shall be said of these wicked outcries and clamours, which have so long filled and distracted the nation, of public robbers, plunderers of the public, ministers enriching themselves with the spoils of the people, and all that infamous weight of calumny, detraction, and defamation, with which the patriots have loaded the servants of the crown, have inflamed the

* Tindal, vol. 20. p. 607. Journals.

minds of the populace, and for which we are told the nation are in the highest expectation of obtaining national justice. I think offenders of this sort, if any such there be, are proper objects of parliamentary justice, but if none such are to be found, what curse is not due to the authors of these detestable practices! And I think the vengeance of the people ought to be satisfied either upon the delinquents, if any crimes can be proved, or upon the inventors of such scandalous reports, who have so vilely imposed upon, and deluded the people. This is common justice; but to that height of impudence are some men now come, as avowedly to declare it is necessary that even injustice should be done, to answer the unjust expectations which they themselves have raised in the kingdom."*

The king had, from long experience, conceived so high an opinion of Walpole's zeal and judgment, that he consulted him in matters of great emergency. It does not appear that any personal conference took place, but his advice was sometimes communicated by the duke of Devonshire, and lord Cholmondeley, sometimes by colonel Selwyn,† and Ranby, surgeon to the household. The letters which he wrote on these occasions were always returned by the king, who

* Correspondence.

† Colonel John Selwyn, aid-de-camp to the duke of Marlborough, colonel of the third regiment of foot, groom of the bedchamber to George the Second, treasurer to queen Caroline, and afterwards treasurer to his present majesty George the Third, when prince of Wales.

was scrupulously delicate in never retaining papers of such a nature, from apprehensions that ill consequences might result from their future discovery. He was led to adopt this practice in consequence of finding, among the papers of George the First, some letters from Sunderland, that betrayed political secrets which ought never to have been revealed.*

Another mode of communication was through the king's confidential page of the back stairs, who used to meet the earl of Orford at the house of Mr. Fowle, in Golden-square, who had married his niece, and whom he had made commissioner of the excise. This meeting took place in the evening; sometimes as late as midnight. The earl of Orford used to come first; the daughters were previously ordered to retire, and the servants were sent from home under various pretences. The young ladies were instigated by curiosity to watch at the top of the stairs. The house door was opened by Mr. Fowle himself, a chair was admitted into the hall, and a little man came out, and went up stairs into the drawing-room, where he remained some time with the earl of Orford, and went away in the same mysterious manner.† This man was probably Livry the king's confidential page, the same who more than once paid similar visits to the earl of Bath.‡

By means of this intercourse, he induced the

* From lord Orford. † Family Anecdote

‡ From the bishop of Salisbury.

king to raise Pelham to the head of the treasury, and to exclude the earl of Bath.

Wilmington being in a declining state of health on the king's departure for Hanover in 1743, it was expected that his death would happen before his return; and it was feared a contest would take place between the two parties in the cabinet, for the first seat at the treasury board. Orford well knew that Carteret, who was to accompany the king abroad, would further the views of lord Bath, or attempt to place himself in that station. He, therefore, earnestly exhorted Pelham, who had always proved himself his stedfast friend, to apply for it before the vacancy. Pelham for some time declined taking that step; and was not prevailed on till after repeated importunities, and probably insinuations from the earl of Orford, that his solicitation alone was necessary to insure success. Pelham at length applied, and obtained a positive promise from the king.

While this business was in agitation, a counter intrigue took place.

Lord Bath had from experience seen his error in supposing that he could direct public measures without holding an ostensible place. He felt that he was a cabinet counsellor without influence, and that few of those who owed their appointments or continuance in office to him, showed any gratitude or deference to their benefactor. He had declined succeeding Sir Robert Walpole in 1742; because he had repeatedly declared, both in parliament and in political pub-

lications, that he never would accept any place. But he was now induced to admit that a resolution thrown out in the ardour of debate, or advanced in party pamphlets, might be broken without subjecting himself to the charge of inconsistency. Yet he did not adopt this resolution without some struggle.

All the members of the treasury board entreated lord Bath to place himself at their head, when the vacancy should happen, as the only measure which could prevent the ruin of their party. But their representations were ineffectual; he refused to make any application before the death of Wilmington. On that event, which happened on the 2d of July, they renewed their solicitations, and at length overcame his reluctance. Lord Bath announced to Carteret, the united wishes of the whole treasury board, expressed his acquiescence, and requested the place. Sir John Rushout sent his own valet de chambre, John George, express to Germany with the dispatch.* The messenger was detained six weeks at Hanau, where the king was engaged in negotiating the treaty of Worms. At length no other answer was returned, than that the king's determination would be signified by the duke of Newcastle.

On the 23d of August, about the time of this intimation, a messenger came from lord Carteret, announcing the appointment of Pelham to the vacant place at the head of the treasury.

* From the bishop of Salisbury, communicated by Sir John Rushout.

This intelligence so greatly surprised the duke of Newcastle, that in a letter to the lord chancellor, who was then in the country, he expresses himself with marks of no less astonishment than satisfaction; boasts of the victory over Carteret, extols the king's firmness, but acknowledges his inability to ascertain the causes of this fortunate event.*

The mystery of this transaction was so impenetrable to both parties, that while Newcastle appeared to be at a loss by what means the influence of Carteret had been defeated, lord Bath suspected that he was betrayed by Carteret. But it is more than probable, that before the return of Rushout's messenger, the king had consulted the earl of Orford, who strongly dissuaded the acceptance of his rival's offer, and enforced the king's adherence to his promise in favour of Pelham.

Another strong proof of the king's personal consideration for the fallen minister, appeared in December. When lord Gower resigned the privy seal, Sir John Rushout again pressed lord Bath to come into office by accepting that place. He thought he had prevailed on him, and desired lord Carteret to mention it to the king. But lord Bath, instead of applying for it himself, in an audience warmly recommended the earl of Carlisle,† who thought himself so secure of success, that he received the compliments of his friends. The king, however, declined

* August, 1743. Hardwicke Papers.
† From the bishop of Salisbury.

this request, and instantly nominated lord Cholmondeley, the son-in-law to the earl of Orford.

The ascendancy of his interest, and the decline of Bath's credit, became daily more manifest. When Rushout was made treasurer of the navy, his place at the treasury board was filled by Henry Fox, the inalienable adherent of Orford; and when Sandys was created a peer, and made cofferer of the household, Pelham united in himself the offices of first lord of the treasury and chancellor of the exchequer.

When Orford arrived in London, before the opening of the session, he found the nation in an alarming ferment, and the most inveterate divisions in the cabinet, between the parties of Carteret and Newcastle. George the Second was extremely unpopular. His partiality to the electorate, and rumours of the preference he showed to the Hanoverian before the British forces, occasioned clamours no less general and vehement, than those excited against William for favouring the Dutch. The toast of "no Hanoverian king," was not unfrequently given in large companies; and the very name of a Hanoverian became a term of disgrace and obloquy. The popular outcry, that England was involved in a war with France, for the support of German measures, opposite to her real interests, was now as violent against Carteret, as the complaints which had been urged against Walpole for tameness and pusillanimity, and base submission to the dictates of France.

Not only the members in opposition decried the king's partiality, and opposed the continuance of the Hanoverian troops in British pay, but the leading members of the cabinet displayed equal repugnance. Newcastle was violent on this head, and after enforcing the necessity of their dismission, stigmatised them by the appellation of a "body of troops, whose views have directed our motions, and whose fears have checked our victories."*

In the midst of these popular clamours and ministerial invectives, the king returned from the continent, and Carteret found a large majority of the cabinet determined to oppose the continuance of the Hanoverian troops. Notwithstanding the indignity to the king, and chagrin to himself, which must result from this determination, he was compelled to acquiesce. The question was therefore abandoned, and the cabinet engaged in devising other expedients.

The arrival of Orford at this juncture, gave a new aspect to the transactions of the ministry. He wholly disapproved the conduct of the war, which had made England the principal instead of an auxiliary on the continent. He reprobated the military proceedings in Flanders, which he properly ascribed to the fervour of Newcastle, eager for continental victories, and the subservience of Carteret to the king's views. But the evil could not now be remedied. He deprecated therefore so gross an insult to the king, without

* The duke of Newcastle to lord Hardwicke, November 7, 1743. Hardwicke Papers.

benefit to the nation. He was aware that if these troops were discharged, others must be substituted, which in the actual state of Europe could not easily be found, and if found would not be attended with less expense. He instantly remonstrated with Pelham, and the other members of the cabinet over whom he retained any influence, against the dereliction of the measure; exposed the pusillanimity of yielding to popular outcry and exaggerated rumours; and he offered to frame the question in such a manner as should render it palatable, and facilitate its adoption.

He never laboured any point during his own administration with more zeal; he employed that personal credit and fascinating influence which he possessed in so eminent a degree over his friends. At his request, a dinner was arranged at Mr. Hanbury Williams's where he met those members of the cabinet, and a few leading men of both houses, who were averse to the measure. He enforced, with much energy, the necessity of reviving the question, notwithstanding the occurrences of the campaign, and finally brought them over to his opinion. In fact, it was *solely* owing to his exertions, that the measure was not abandoned. He did not himself support it by his eloquence in the house of peers; but his brother Horace defended it in the commons with great ability and strength of argument. At the same time he accompanied his defence with so many sarcastic allusions to the weakness and subserviency of the cabinet,

as to demonstrate that he acted from no impulse, but that internal conviction which flowed from his own experience and his brother's suggestions.*

The earl of Orford, after his resignation, had seldom appeared in the house of lords, and seldomer spoke, having observed to his brother Horace, that he had left his tongue with the commons. On one occasion, however, he showed that he still retained his former powers of eloquence. He had given ministers repeated information of the hostile designs of France, to invade this country in support of the Pretender; but his intelligence had been disregarded and ridiculed as the effusions of discontent, and the remains of those apprehensions of Jacobitism which had been considered by his enemies, as artifices to keep the nation in continual suspense and alarm. It appeared, however, that his intelligence was well founded.

On the 18th of February the king sent a message to both houses, acquainting them that he had received undoubted information, that the eldest son of the Pretender to his crown was arrived at Paris, who, in concert with some of his disaffected subjects, was preparing to make an invasion, and was to be supported by the French fleet then in the channel; adding, that he did not doubt their concurrence in proper measures to defeat the design. Accordingly, both houses joined in an address, expressing the warmest zeal and unanimity, and signifying

* Lord Hardwicke's Parliamentary Journal. Debrett's Debates.

that they would, at the hazard of their lives and fortunes, support his right and title to the kingdom in opposition to, and defiance of the Pretender and his adherents, and all other enemies.*

On the 28th of February, Newcastle, by order of the king, laid before the house of lords, some letters and papers containing farther intelligence concerning the intended invasion from France. He concluded by observing, that their lordships having already expressed, in the address of last week, their indignation at so daring and insolent an attempt, and their resolution to support his majesty against the Pretender and his adherents, he did not think it possible to find words more expressive of zeal and duty, than were chosen on that occasion, and with which the king was so much satisfied, that he had been pleased to declare his confidence in their vigour and unanimity.†

At the conclusion of his speech, the house ordered counsel to be heard in a private cause, when Orford rose from his seat, and with no less animation than dignity, observed, that although he had made a resolution of never troubling the house, it was not without a very uncommon degree of grief he found it now indispensably necessary to break that resolution, so necessary, that he could not, in his opinion, continue silent without a crime.

"I sincerely wish," he said, "that my former

* Debrett's Parliamentary Debates from 1743 to 1745, vol. 1. p. 172. † Debrett.

apprehensions concerning France and the Pretender, for which I have been so often and so severely ridiculed, had not been so often and so fully verified. But I could not easily have believed, that it could ever have been necessary for me to speak on an occasion like this; that it could ever have fallen to my lot to remind your lordships of the respect due to the person of our sovereign. I could not easily have believed, nor could I have imagined, that the common forms of decency could have been violated in this august assembly. It is with the greatest emotion and surprise that I see such a neglect of duty. My knowledge of your lordships, will not suffer me to term it by any harsher name, than that of forgetfulness; but such forgetfulness I have never known in my long acquaintance with parliamentary proceedings.

"When his majesty has communicated to your lordships intelligence of the highest importance, is he to receive no answer from the house? Is his intimation to be passed over without ceremony and without regard? Such behaviour must doubtless arise from want of consideration, for the least reflection will show that it is not easy to treat our sovereign with less respect. A little recollection, my lords, will soon convince you, that when his majesty's care and penetration have been employed for the security of the public happiness, when, as he promised, he has endeavoured to obtain a more exact account of the pernicious designs of France; when he has made

some further discoveries of them, and has shown his regard for our counsels, by imparting them to us; can we be so undutiful, so indecent, as not to return an address of thanks? If we do not, how will it appear that we have received them? For this reason, if for no other, the noble duke ought, in my humble opinion, to have made some motion for that purpose. And certainly, my lords, our language is not so barren that we cannot find words to express our duty on every occasion, and testify our acknowledgments for every instance of regard shown us by our sovereign; and although an address may appear to some a repetition of that which has been lately presented, yet I cannot think it an unreasonable or a superfluous repetition.

"As such treatment my lords, has never been deserved by his majesty, so it has never before been practised. And surely, my lords, if his hereditary council should select, for such an instance of disrespect, a time of distraction and confusion; a time when the greatest power in Europe is setting up a Pretender to his throne, and when only the winds have hindered an attempt to invade his dominions; it may give our enemies occasion to imagine and report, that we have lost all veneration for the person of our sovereign.

"I have, indeed, particular reason to express my astonishment and my uneasiness on this occasion. I feel my breast fired with the warmest gratitude to a gracious and royal master, whom

I have so long served; my heart overflows with zeal for his honour, and ardour for the lasting security of his illustrious house. But, my lords, the danger is common, and an invasion equally involves all our happiness, all our hopes, and all our fortunes

"It cannot be thought consistent with the wisdom of your lordships, to be employed in determining private property, when so weighty an affair as the security of the whole kingdom demands your attention; when it is not known but at this instant the enemy has set foot on our coasts, is ravaging our country with fire and sword, and threatening us with no less than extirpation or servitude.

"If you neglect the public security, if you suffer the declared enemies of your name to proceed in their designs without resistance, where will be your dignities, your honours, and your liberties? You will then boast no more of the high prerogatives of your house, your freedom of speech, and share in the legislature. If the enemy, my lords, should obtain success, that success which they apparently expect, and which yet they would not hope, without some prospect of being joined by the disaffected part of our own countrymen, the consequence must be, that the person whom they would place on the throne, would retain only the shadow of a sovereign. He would be no other than a vice-roy, to the French king; and your lordships, who now sit in this house with a dignity envied by every class of

nobility in the world, would then be no better than the slaves of a slave to an ambitious, arbitrary tyrant.

"Pardon me, my lords, if a zeal for his majesty, for your honour and dignities, and the safety of the nation, fires me with uncommon ardour. Permit me to rouse you from this lethargy, and let it not be said, that you suffer any disregard to be shown to intimations thus important; intimations sent by his majesty, and which relate to nothing less than the preservation of the kingdom. I hope, therefore, before you proceed to call in the council for a private cause, you will show so much regard to the great, the universal, the national interest, as to concert a proper form of address to his majesty, that he may not appear labouring for our safety, while we ourselves neglect it."*

It is observed by a person who was present at the time,† that he spoke this speech with an emotion and spirit which showed that it was quite unpremeditated, and came from his heart. It had an immediate effect; the whole house saw the impropriety of the proceeding. Newcastle confessed his inattention, though in a tone and manner, and with such expressions, as showed that he was stung with the remark. An address was drawn up by the chancellor, similar to that which had passed on the 18th,

* The earl of Hardwicke's manuscript journal of remarkable debates. Debrett's Debates, vol. 1. p. 170.

† The late earl of Hardwicke.

and was unanimously approved. The prince of Wales, struck with this well-timed effusion of loyalty, quitted his seat, and taking lord Orford by the hand, expressed his grateful acknowledgments. As a testimony of his satisfaction, he revoked the prohibition which prevented the family of lord Orford from attending his levee.*

At the close of the session, Orford retired as usual to Houghton, where he remained under the tortures of a nephritic complaint, till he received a summons from the king to return to London.

At this time the king was exceedingly distressed and embarrassed. He was divided between his inclination for Carteret, and his inability of carrying, without the assistance of the Pelhams, through both houses, the favourite measure of prosecuting the war with vigour in Flanders. Ever since the resignation of Walpole, who had formed the bond of union which kept the heterogeneous parts together, and gave strength to the executive government, the administration had been weak and disjointed. There was no one person whose ascendancy in the closet, influence in parliament, and pre-eminence of talents, enabled him to take a decided lead in the cabinet. Great divisions had given rise to a long series of cabals, between Newcastle and Carteret, which if not suppressed or moderated, threatened ruin both to domestic and foreign affairs.o These feuds had arisen to a

* From lord Orford.

height so alarming, as to necessitate the removal of one of the contending parties.

Carteret, who on the recent death of his mother, had succeeded to the earldom of Granville, was strenuously supported by the king; but the party of Newcastle preponderated both in the cabinet and in parliament. It became a great object of both parties to secure the interest of lord Orford, as well from the consideration paid to his advice by the king, as from the number of members in both houses whom he directed or influenced. In conformity with this view, Newcastle observes, in a letter to the chancellor, "It is necessary to find means of satisfying lord Orford, and a certain number of his friends; for without this last, we have no ground to stand on, and shall, I fear, be obliged to show in a few months that we have not strength enough to support the king's affairs, though he should put them into our hands." *

Granville adopted, as he thought, a surer method, which was, to employ the influence of the king. By his majesty's command, lord Cholmondeley wrote to his father-in-law. He informed him that the king, after many gracious expressions and acknowledgments of his services in regard to the question for the continuance of the Hanover forces, requested his attendance a week or ten days before the meeting of parliament. Long experience, he said, of his zeal and attachment, and a knowledge of his con-

* Duke of Newcastle to lord Hardwicke, November 10, 1744. Hardwicke Papers.

summate judgment in domestic affairs, the consciousness of the great weight of his opinion and influence over so many members in both houses of parliament, induced his majesty to require his advice and concurrence, in subjects of the highest importance, at this critical juncture.

The answer was couched in the most respectful terms of duty and zeal. After saying, that as the care and study of his life, while he had the honour to serve the king, had been directed to deserve his favour and good opinion; so he should still, in a private capacity, persevere in his endeavours to merit the continuance of his majesty's grace and goodness, the only reward he had now to ask for all past or future services. He expressed his intention of obeying the king's commands by setting out for London, as soon as his health would permit. He hoped to arrive there before the meeting of parliament was settled, and the business finally adjusted, till which time, he could be of no use in recommending measures to such persons as paid any regard to his opinion. With respect to the conduct of affairs, he declined entering into any previous consultation, and yet ventured, with his usual frankness, to give a decided disapprobation to the system of continental politics which had been recently pursued. He observed, "I am heartily sorry to see the king's affairs reduced to such extremities. It has been a long time easy to foresee the unavoidable, and almost insurmountable difficulties that would attend the present system of politics. I wish to God

it was as easy to show the way out of them. But be assured, that I will in every thing, to the utmost of my power, consult and contribute to the honour, interest, and safety of the king and kingdom."* In reply, lord Cholmondeley expressed the king's cordiality and satisfaction, and enforced the necessity of his immediate appearance, if he could travel without injury to his health.

In this situation of affairs he was requested by Pelham, and advised by his brother Horace, who suggested that it was a manœuvre of Granville, to delay his journey, as on his arrival he would be embarrassed between the choice of two contending parties, and might not be able to act without offending his royal master. Yet although the state of his health was fully sufficient to justify his continuance in the country, he thought it his duty to obey the summons, and left Houghton on the 19th of November. On his arrival in London, he found the whole arrangement finally settled, without any occasion for his concurrence. The Pelhams had formed a coalition with the prince's friends, the Tories and opposition Whigs, which was ludicrously called the *Broad Bottom*. Granville had been compelled to resign, but carried with him the regret of the king, and strong assurances of future favour. Harrington succeeded him as secretary of state.

But the smiles or frowns of sovereigns, the

* The earl of Orford to lord Cholmondeley, November 17, 1744. Correspondence.

petty intrigues of courts, the bickerings of discordant politics, and the arrangement of a new administration, were no longer objects of Orford's attention.

He had long been afflicted with the stone. The journey from Houghton, which he employed four days in performing, aggravated the symptoms, and brought on such excruciating torments, that the description of his sufferings, during the last day's journey, which was only twenty miles, filled Ranby* himself with horror. Not finding the expected relief from regular medical assistance, he had recourse to Dr. Jurin, who administered a powerful solvent, which, contrary to the advice of his friends, the patient repeatedly took in large quantities. The medicine dissolved the stone, but the violence of its operation lacerated the bladder, and occasioned the most dreadful agonies. His only relief was opium, and from an apprehension of returning pain, he took such large and repeated doses, that for six weeks he was almost in a constant state of stupefaction, except for two or three hours in the afternoon, when he seemed to rouse from his lethargy, and converse with his usual vivacity and cheerfulness.

A few days before he died, he gave an instance that his judgment was sound and unimpaired. The duke of Cumberland having ineffectually remonstrated with the king against a marriage with the princess of Denmark, who was deformed, sent his governor, Mr. Poyntz,

* Ranby's Narrative.

to consult the earl of Orford, on the best methods which he could adopt to avoid the match. After a moment's reflection, Orford advised him to give his consent to the marriage, on condition of receiving an ample and immediate establishment, "and believe me," he added, "when I say, that the match will be no longer pressed." The duke followed his advice, and the event happened as the dying statesman had foretold.*

Orford bore his sufferings with unexampled fortitude and resignation.

Ranby, his surgeon, who published a narrative of his last illness, thus expresses himself: "When I recollect his resigned behaviour, under the most excruciating pains, the magnanimous sentiments which filled his soul, when on the eve, seemingly, of dissolution, and call to mind the exalted expressions continually flowing from him at this severe time of trial; however extraordinary his natural talents, or acquired abilities were; however he had distinguished himself by eloquence in the senate, or by singular judgment and depth of penetration in councils; this incomparable constancy and astonishing presence of mind, must raise in my opinion as sublime ideas of him, as any act of his life besides, however good and popular; and reflect a renown on his name, equal to that which consecrates the memory of the remarkable sages of antiquity."

* From lord Orford.

He expired* on the 18th of March 1745, in the sixty-ninth year of his age. His remains were interred in the parish church at Houghton, without monument or inscription:

"So peaceful rests without a stone, a name
"Which once had "honours," titles, wealth, and fame."†

* An account of his family and descendants is given in the genealogical table, vol. 1. chap. 1. † Pope.

CHAPTER 63.

1745.

Principles of Walpole's Administration—Pacific System—Finance—Commerce—Eloquence—Publications—Public Character.

THE character of a Minister is to be traced from the history of his whole administration. Candour therefore requires that we should not judge by the selection of detached parts, but combine the whole in a connected series, and referring his conduct to one grand principle of action, judge of it as critics do of an epic poem, by comprehending, in one point of view, the beginning, the middle, and the end.

Did the administration of Walpole present any uniform principle, which may be traced in every part, and which gave combination and consistency to the whole?—Yes.—And that principle was, THE LOVE OF PEACE.

The great leading features of this pacific system, are thus delineated by himself:

"To prevent a war, and to take the proper steps, that may not only keep us out of the war, but enable us to contribute towards restoring the public tranquillity, is no less desirable, and a conduct no less justifiable, than to carry on and support a war, in which we are unhappily engaged. If then *paries cum proximus ardet*, it

is as advisable to look after ourselves, and to prevent the flames reaching our houses, as it would be to extinguish a fire already kindled; and if to prevent, and by proper care to avoid a cold or a fever, be easier, safer, and wiser, than to cure the distemper, I may venture to maintain, that measures tending to prevent a war, or that are preparatory to it, if unavoidable, are as justifiable and as reasonable, if necessary, as the same measures would be in case of an actual war."*

This same system is also fully developed by Horace Walpole.

"This salutary plan of *preventive and defensive measures*, has been the fundamental rule of all his late and present majesty's counsels; the rudder by which their actions have been steadily and constantly steered, with respect to the conduct of foreign princes and states: ever cautious not to plunge their faithful subjects rashly into a ruinous war, and equally prepared and resolved to protect their just rights against all attempts, should they be obliged to take up arms for that purpose.

"Upon this principle it may be, and indeed has been, necessary to make, at different times, defensive alliances in conjunction with, or in opposition to the same powers, as the different dispositions and behaviour of those powers might tend to the benefit or disadvantage of this nation. And this seeming change of conduct will appear not to have arisen from inconstancy

* Some Considerations on the Public Funds, p. 106.

of temper, or of views on our part, but from the variation of views and intentions on the part of others." *

This preventive system was incessantly reprobated by his adversaries, and assailed with all the weapons of eloquence and wit. He was accused of extreme folly, in laying down a system, prudent for a petty state, but very improper for a country which had so extensive a sway, and ought to take the lead in Europe. It was stigmatized as a servile submission to the influence and interests of France. His love of peace was characterized as a temporising system of expedients, a dereliction of national honour, and a pacific obstinacy. He was derided for fitting out provisional fleets and pacific armaments, which plunged the nation into the same expense as an active war, while they produced nothing but Spithead exhibitions, and Hyde Park reviews.

Allowing, however, the full effect of these objections, and making no abatements for the prejudices of party, and the jealousy of political rivalry, few words are necessary to show the beneficial consequences which resulted from the *general* tenor of his administration. The protestant succession was established, the Jacobite faction suppressed; the government acquired energy on a constitutional basis; and by the prevention of foreign war, domestic tranquillity was secured. Under the calm stability of such a government, public credit flourished, com-

* The Interests of Great Britain steadily pursued, p. 24.

merce increased, manufactures were improved, and agriculture ameliorated.

The strongest objection which has been urged against the minister is, that the general tendency of his foreign measures was calculated to aggrandize the house of Bourbon, and depress the house of Austria. In examining this topic, it is necessary to consider the motives which induced him to adopt this line of conduct. He was fully aware that France was the only power which could effectually assist the Pretender; he constantly predicted, and the prediction was verified by the event, that whenever there was a war with France, the British crown would be fought for on British ground. By maintaining amity with France, during so long a period, he broke and dispirited the disaffected party at home, and diminished the danger of an invasion, by increasing the friends, and reducing the enemies of the new family on the throne.

An act of policy, however, attendant on this alliance, which none of our historians seem sufficiently to have appreciated, and which showed great address and prudence in the ministers, was, their unceasing attention to prevent the French from improving their fleet, or exercising their seamen. The *care of the sea England took upon herself;* and Fleury was accused by the French, of having been cajoled by Walpole to sacrifice the marine.

If any part of Walpole's conduct stands peculiarly exposed to censure, it is his refusal to assist the house of Austria, when exposed, without

an ally, to the united efforts of France, Spain, and Sardinia.

As there is scarcely any vice without a concomitant virtue, so there is no virtue without an alloy. His well known desire of peace, exposed him to be over-reached by those with whom he was treating, and who availed themselves of his extreme unwillingness to engage in hostilities. In fact, the minister did not always appreciate the just maxim, "that the discovery of vehement wishes generally frustrates their attainment, and too much impatience to conclude a treaty, gives an adversary great advantage; that a sort of courage belongs to negotiation, as well as to operations in the field; and a negotiator must seem willing to hazard all, if he wishes to secure any material object."*

Nothing can justify the desertion of the Emperor, but the internal situation of the country, the fear of exciting discontents at the eve of a general election, and the full conviction that the Pretender would, in case of a rupture, receive assistance from France, and attempt an invasion. Nor can it be deemed an improbable supposition, that spirited resolutions, if adopted in 1733, would have alarmed Fleury, inclined to pacific measures, and fearful of a rupture with England, when the French navy was almost annihilated; would have compelled France to guaranty the Pragmatic Sanction, and thus have averted the danger, which the house of Austria incurred on

* Burke's Thoughts on a Regicide Peace.

the death of Charles the Sixth, of an irretrievable depression.

But peace is so desirable for a commercial country, that much praise must be due to the minister even for erring, if he erred, in preserving so great a blessing. And who shall presume to censure a conduct which conferred inestimable advantages while it exposed to uncertain evils; which by the augmentation of the revenue, and the increase of trade and manufactures, the necessary consequences of a stable and tranquil government at home, gave to this country the sinews of war, and enabled the greatest war minister* that England ever produced, to make those vast and glorious efforts which terminated in the depression of the house of Bourbon.

The opposers of Sir Robert Walpole invariably and constantly asserted, that his administration was founded on the open and manifest sacrifice of the British glory and interest abroad, to those foreign dominions, in which it was even a condition in the act of settlement, that we should have no concern, and which was acknowledged by the ministers themselves to be the touchstone of all our negotiations at every court of Europe.† But it must be allowed, even by those who so peremptorily advanced this assertion, that never was the union of Hanover with Great Britain more conducive to the real interests of this country, if its *general* effects, notwithstanding

* William Pitt, earl of Chatham.

† Case of the Hanover forces.

some occasional deviations, contributed to preserve us in peace abroad.

In fact, though it cannot be denied, that German prejudices and partial interests occasionally interfered with the great concerns of England; yet it is no less true, that no minister ever made so many, and such powerful remonstrances against petty Germanic schemes. He took all proper opportunities of inculcating just notions of dignity and credit. He had even the courage to observe to George the Second, that the welfare of his dominions both at home and abroad, and the felicity of Europe, depended on his being a great king, rather than a considerable elector.

He also laboured incessantly to mitigate the effects of the rooted inveteracy between the houses of Brunswick and Brandenburg. Finding the king vehement in a resolution to commence hostilities with the king of Prussia, either for enrolling troops on the territories of Hanover, or for some inconsiderable acquisition in Germany; he represented the danger and ill policy of the attempt. "Will your majesty," he said, "engage in an enterprise which must prove no less disgraceful than disadvantageous? Is not the inequality of forces so great, that Hanover will be no more than a breakfast to the Prussian army?"

If we compare the uniform conduct of Walpole with the uniform conduct of opposition, we shall find that he struggled with all his might for the preservation of the credit, quiet,

and happiness of the nation. They contended for such proceedings as had a tendency to involve the country in all the misfortunes of foreign and domestic war.

While they were declaring that the nation was impoverished, the trade ruined, the people loaded with insupportable burthens, and all farther resources totally cut off, they were clamouring for foreign aggression, which would have required additional supplies, and increased the national embarrassments. And when their unceasing efforts had plunged the nation into a war, the public soon discovered the falsity of that assertion, so confidently thrown out for a number of years by Bolingbroke, and re-echoed by the members of opposition, that the preventive and temporising measures of Sir Robert Walpole had been attended with as much expense as an active war. For the war, which commenced in 1739, and terminated with the peace of Aix la Chapelle in 1749, added thirty millions to the national debt; and one year of the German war cost more than all the preventive measures and *pacific obstinacy* of Sir Robert Walpole, during his whole administration.

As an able minister of finance, his merit has been generally acknowledged, not only by his friends and admirers, but even by several of his most violent opponents. No one can suspect Pitt of paying a tribute of applause to his memory from mean and adulatory motives; yet even he observed, in the house of commons, that Sir Robert Walpole was a very able minister,

Perceiving several members laugh, he added, "The more I reflect on my conduct, the more I blame myself for opposing the excise bill," and concluded by saying, with his usual energy; "Let those who are ashamed to confess their errors laugh out. Can it be deemed adulation to praise a minister who is no more?" The whole house seemed abashed, and became silent.*

It is unnecessary to urge any other proof of his abilities for finance, than that confidence which, throughout his whole administration, monied men and the nation placed in the government; and that nothing created greater alarm among them, than the apprehensions that he would either rapidly pay off the national debt, or reduce the interest. This fact is an answer to those speculative reasoners, who not adverting to the temper of the times, and judging of past transactions by present circumstances, indiscriminately censure the minister for not discharging the whole public burthens, for alienating the sinking fund, and for opposing Sir John Barnard's plan to reduce the interest of the national debt.

His financial operations have been already so amply discussed in the course of these memoirs,† that it is needless to enlarge on particular topics. The improvement, however, in the mode of bor-

* Communicated by Dr. Symonds, professor of modern languages in the university of Cambridge, who was in the gallery of the house of commons at the time.

† See the chapters on excise, sinking fund, and reduction of interest.

rowing by means of exchequer bills, which I have omitted to mention, deserves particular notice. The custom was to borrow a large sum, the interest of which continued to accrue till the whole sum advanced on bills was paid off, though in the interval considerable portions of the money had been paid into the exchequer. Walpole made a reform in 1723, by which the bills were regularly taken up as the money came in, and by this means saved an enormous charge of interest to government.*

Parsimony of the public money was one of his chief characteristics. In corroboration of this fact, many instances occur in the course of this work, and display him resisting expenditure, even in opposition to the wishes of the king. To this part of his conduct, the duke of Newcastle bore testimony, at the time when he was censuring his measures in other respects with the greatest asperity. "As this is a demand of money," he says, in a letter to lord Hardwicke, "we shall find Sir Robert more difficult to comply than upon former occasions."†

The improvement of the British trade under his auspices, is generally acknowledged. Dean Tucker calls him, "the best commercial minister this country ever produced;"‡ and it was justly said of him, that he found the book of rates the worst, and left it best in Europe.

* A short history of exchequer bills, which I found among the Orford Papers, corrected by Sir Robert Walpole, will best elucidate this transaction. Correspondence.

† August 19, 1741. Hardwicke Papers.

‡ Tucker against Locke, p. 222.

The eloquence of Sir Robert Walpole was plain, perspicuous, forcible, and manly, not courting, yet not always avoiding metaphorical, ornamental, and classical allusions. Though addressed to the reason more than to the feelings, yet on some occasions it was highly animated and impassioned. No debater was ever more happy in quickness of apprehension, sharpness of reply, and in turning the arguments of his assailants against themselves.

The tone of his voice was pleasing and melodious; his pronunciation distinct and audible, though he never entirely lost the provincial accent. His style, though by no means elegant, often deficient in taste, and sometimes bordering on vulgarity, was highly nervous and animated, persuasive and plausible.

The force of his speeches resulted rather from the general weight, energy, and arrangement of the whole, than from the splendour of particular parts. He possessed what Horace calls *lucidus ordo*, a luminous arrangement of the most complicated subjects; and a power of communicating his information to others who were ignorant of the topics on which he treated. Even calculation in his mouth was rendered not uninteresting.

Persons distinguished for judgment and abilities, have concurred in paying the tribute of applause to his oratorical talents. Speaker Onslow commends his speech on the peerage bill, as a remarkable effort of natural eloquence, and

genius.* Lord Cornbury and the duke of Argyle praised, in similar terms, his speech when he relinquished the excise scheme; and Pitt extolled the Philippic against Sir William Wyndham on the secession, as one of the finest speeches he had ever heard.†

A proof of his ready eloquence, recorded by bishop Newton, is given in this volume,‡ to which I am enabled to add another. During an important debate in the house of commons, he observed that a member of opposition who sat near him, had a written speech concealed in his hat, and obtained a general knowledge of the contents from occasional glimpses. At the moment when the member was about to speak, he rose, and began by observing, "were I a member in opposition, I would make use of these arguments." He then recapitulated the speech which he had just cast his eyes over, and adding, "I will now reply to these observations," he refuted the arguments in an able and masterly manner.§

It was his custom to note down the heads of the leading expressions in the speeches of opposition, either for his own use, if he himself spoke, or for the use of Sir William Yonge, if absent at the beginning of the debate, who often through the medium of these memorandums,‖ answered

* Speaker Onslow's Remarks, Correspondence, Period IV.

† From the late earl of Hardwicke.

‡ Chapter 7. § From Lord Orford.

‖ Among the Orford and Walpole Papers, some of these parliamentary memorandums are preserved. They serve to establish one

those arguments which he had not heard. As to himself, he generally spoke extempore, and without notes, except on points where figures and calculations were necessary. In some instances of great magnitude and delicacy, he put down previously general heads of the arguments which he intended to adopt. Some of these minutes are preserved among the Orford and Walpole Papers, and I have availed myself of them in the course of this work.

Nor was his eloquence confined to the debates in parliament. As chancellor of the exchequer, he was to decide in a cause of great difficulty and importance, between Nash and the East India company. The barons being divided, it was his province, as chancellor, to give the decision; and after a long trial, in which six of the most able lawyers pleaded on each side for nineteen hours, he summed up the whole, and in a speech of an hour and a half, expressed his opinion and sentence with as great skill, strength, eloquence, and perspicuity, "as if he had been bred to the law, and had practised no other business all his life."*

He gave to the public several political pamphlets, which, at the time, were much read. His style in these writings was popular, perspicuous, and familiar; not affecting ambitious ornament, or subtilty of argument. He must have written

truth, which has been much questioned and controverted; that the debates which were given in the papers and periodical publications, were, upon the whole, not unfaithful. See Preface.

* Lord Hervey to Horace Walpole, November 18-29, 1735. Correspondence.

with great ease and correctness, since "The Consideration concerning the Public Funds," one of the most difficult and complicated of his works, was printed from the rough draught in his own hand writing.* I find many instances of his having revised, corrected, and made additions to numerous political pamphlets, particularly to those written by lord Hervey; a proof that he paid more attention to that mode of controversy than is usually imagined.‡

* Orford Papers.

‡ It is extremely difficult to give an exact catalogue of his political writings. The list published by his son in the Royal and Noble Authors is both defective and inaccurate, as the late earl candidly acknowledged. I shall here give as accurate a list as it has been in my power to obtain, marking those with a † which I have not been able to procure.

† The Sovereign's Answer to a Gloucestershire Address.

A Letter to a Friend concerning the public Debts, particularly that of the Navy, 1710.

A Statement of the Thirty-five Millions mentioned in a Report of the House of Commons, 1710.

The two last articles are comprised in a publication, called The Debts of the Nation Stated and Considered, in four Letters, which is printed in Somers's Tracts. The two other letters, namely, An Estimate of the Debts of her Majesty's Navy, and A Brief Account of the Debts provided for by the South Sea Act, 1712, have likewise been ascribed to Sir Robert Walpole; but as it appears to me, without sufficient foundation.

Four Letters to a Friend in North Britain, upon the publishing the Trial of Dr. Sacheverel, 1710.

† A Pamphlet on the Vote of the House of Commons, with relation to the Allies not furnishing their Quota.

A short History of the Parliament, 1713. A new edition of this pamphlet, from party motives, was given by Almon in 1763, under the title of "A Short History of that Parliament which committed Sir Robert Walpole to the Tower, expelled him the House of Commons, and approved of the infamous peace of Utrecht." It was preceded by an advertisement, which speaks of Sir Robert Walpole as a minister *who had faithfully served the crown five and twenty years,*

He had a ready and tenacious memory. He was remarkable for method and dispatch in transacting business. Chesterfield, who did not love him, pays an eulogium to this quality: "The hurry and confusion of the duke of Newcastle, do not proceed from his business, but from his want of method. Sir Robert Walpole who had ten times the business, was never seen in a hurry, because he always did it with method."* And lord Hervey characterises him by observing that "he did every thing with the same ease and tranquillity as if he was doing nothing."‡

In 1723, he united the office of Secretary of state to his other employments, and in addition to the internal government of the kingdom, the whole correspondence on foreign affairs devolved on him. During the illness of Sir William Strickland, which rendered him incapable of

Thoughts of a Member of the Lower House, in relation to a Project for restraining and limiting the Power of the Crown in the further Creation of Peers, 1719.

† The South Sea Scheme considered, 1720.

Some considerations concerning the Public Revenues, and the Annual Supplies granted by Parliament, occasioned by a late Pamphlet, intituled, An Inquiry into the Conduct of our Domestic Affairs, from the Year 1721 to Christmas 1733, 1735.

The late earl of Orford enumerates among his father's works, a letter from a foreign minister in England, to M. Pettekum, 1710. I have reason to think this pamphlet was not written by Sir Robert Walpole, as it is a vindication of the Tories. Probably he might have written an answer. On mentioning this circumstance to the earl of Orford, he candidly acknowledged that he might have been mistaken. See Royal and Noble Authors, Article, Earl of Orford.

* Lord Chesterfield's Letters to his Son, Letter 309.

‡ October 31, 1735. Correspondence.

occupation, Walpole transacted all the business of secretary at war, although it was the middle of a session of parliament.

It is most remarkable, that notwithstanding his extensive correspondence, he seems seldom to have employed a secretary. I have never found one letter which was not wholly written in his own hand; and I am fully convinced, that all the copies in the Hardwicke Collection, were taken from originals in his own writing.

It is also no less remarkable, that he was in the habit of transcribing whole letters; that he constantly noted the substance of the foreign correspondence, and made numerous extracts from the dispatches of foreign ministers, which would lead a person not acquainted with his multifarious occupations, to conjecture that he studied nothing but foreign affairs; while he was petulantly reproached by those who witnessed the invariable attention which he paid to the internal government of the country, for his ignorance of foreign transactions. The Orford and Walpole Papers abound with numerous extracts and memorandums, which prove his indefatigable exertions.

When the validity of the patent of collector of the customs, which he had secured for the benefit of his family, was disputed, all the briefs for his counsel were drawn up by himself.* Murray, who was employed as counsel, in behalf of Madame le Neve, whose cause Orford warmly supported in the house of lords, said of

* Clough.

him, that he never met with any man with a clearer head and more perspicuous method of arranging his ideas.*

The great principle on which Walpole conducted himself, seems to have been his favourite motto, *quieta non movere*, not to disturb things at rest. He rightly judged, from the temper of man, ever inclined to speculation, that too frequent innovations would beget a proneness to change, and expose the country to great and certain dangers. An instance of his adherence to this principle, is recorded by one of his contemporaries. Soon after the excise scheme, Sir William Keith, who had been deputy governor of Virginia, came over with a plan of an American tax: Sir Robert Walpole being asked by lord Chesterfield what he thought of Sir William's project, replied, "I have old England set against me, and do you think I will have new England likewise?"† But although he followed in general this true and wise principle, yet he by no means seems to have deserved the censure passed upon him in common with the other ministers: "That if any political system was "invariably adhered to during the reign of "George the Second, the purport of it appears "to have been to leave things as they were, or "to check any attempt which might be made "to innovation, or even to inquiry."‡

His whole system was a system of gradual

* From the Earl of Orford.

† From the late earl of Hardwicke, communicated by lord Chesterfield. Hardwicke Papers.

‡ Sinclair, vol. 2. p. 24.

improvement. It is only necessary to cast a superficial glance over the regulations in commerce, finance, and jurisprudence, which took place during his administration, to be convinced of this truth.

The fate of Sir Robert Walpole's character as a minister has been extremely singular. While he was in power, he was reviled with unceasing obloquy, and his whole conduct arraigned as a mass of corruption and political depravity. But he himself lived to see the propriety of his preventive measures acknowledged by the public. As time softened the asperities of personal animosity, and as the spirit of party subsided, there was scarcely one of his opponents who did not publicly or privately retract their unqualified censures, and pay a due tribute to the wisdom of the general principles which guided his administration. Impartial posterity has done still greater justice to the memory of a statesman, who, whatever might have been his public or private defects, maintained his country in tranquillity for a longer period, than had been experienced since the reign of James the First.

I shall close this sketch of Walpole's public character in the words of a celebrated writer, who alone seems to have fairly appreciated his merits, and scanned his defects:

"He was an honourable man, and a sound Whig. He was not, as the Jacobites and discontented Whigs of his own time have represented him, and as ill informed people still re-

present him, a prodigal and corrupt minister. They charged him, in their libels and seditious conversations, as having first reduced corruption to a system. Such was their cant. But he was far from governing by corruption. He governed by party attachments. The charge of systematic corruption is less applicable to him, perhaps, than to any minister who ever served the crown for so great a length of time. He gained over very few from the opposition. Without being a genius of the first class, he was an intelligent, prudent, and safe minister. He loved peace; and he helped to communicate the same disposition to nations at least as warlike and restless as that in which he had the chief direction of affairs. Though he served a master who was fond of martial fame, he kept all the establishments very low. The land tax continued at two shillings in the pound for the greater part of his administration. The other impositions were moderate. The profound repose, the equal liberty, the firm protection of just laws, during the long period of his power, were the principal causes of that prosperity which took such rapid strides towards perfection; and which furnished to this nation, ability to acquire the military glory which it has since obtained, as well as to bear the burthens, the cause and consequence of that warlike reputation. With many virtues, public and private, he had his faults; but his faults were superficial. A careless, coarse, and over familiar style of discourse, without sufficient regard to persons or occasions, and an almost

total want of political decorum, were the errors by which he was most hurt in the public opinion, and those through which his enemies obtained the greatest advantage over him. But justice must be done. The prudence, steadiness, and vigilance of that man, joined to the greatest possible lenity in his character and his politics, preserved the crown to this royal family; and with it, their laws and liberties to this country."*

* Burke's Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs, p. 63.

CHAPTER 64.

1745.

Private Character of Sir Robert Walpole—Person—Disposition—Manners—Social Qualities—Neglect of Men of Letters—Conduct in Retirement.

SIR ROBERT WALPOLE was tall and well proportioned, and in his youth and opening manhood so comely, that at the time of his marriage he and his wife were called the *handsome couple*, and among the knights, who walked in procession at the installation of the garter, in 1725, he was, next to the duke of Grafton and lord Townshend, most distinguished for his appearance. As he advanced in years he became extremely corpulent and unwieldy. His countenance does not seem to have been remarkable for strong traits. The features were regular; when he spoke, and particularly when he smiled, his physiognomy was pleasing, benign, and enlightened. His eye was full of spirit and fire, and his brow prominent and manly.

His style of dress was usually plain and simple; a circumstance which was not overlooked by the Craftsman, who thus holds him up to ridicule: "There entered a man dressed in a

plain habit, with a purse of gold in his hand. He threw himself forward into the room in a bluff ruffianly manner, a smile, or rather a sneer upon his countenance."* His address was so frank and open, his conversation so pleasing, and his manner so fascinating, that those who lived with him in habits of intimacy adored him, those who saw him occasionally loved him, and even his most bitter opponents could not hate him. One of these did not hesitate to say of him, "Never was a man in private life more beloved: And his enemies allow no man did ever in private life deserve it more. He was humane and grateful, and a generous friend to all who he did not think would abuse that friendship. This character naturally procured that attachment to his person, which has been falsely attributed solely to a corrupt influence and to private interest; but this showed itself at a time when these principles were very faint in their operations, and when his ruin seemed inevitable."†

Good temper and equanimity were his leading characteristics, and the placability imprinted on his countenance was not belied by his conduct. Of this disposition, his generous rival, Pulteney, thought so highly, that in a conversation with Johnson, he said, "Sir Robert was of a temper so calm and equal, and so hard to be provoked, that he was very sure he never felt the bitterest invectives against him for half an hour."‡

* No. 16. † Faction Detected, p. 62.

‡ Hawkins's Life of Johnson, p. 314.

His deportment was manly and decisive, yet affable and condescending. He was easy of access; his method of bestowing a favour heightened the obligation; and from his gracious manner of declining, few persons went out of his company discontented.

Among those parts of his convivial character which have attracted attention, his laugh is noticed for singular gaiety and heartiness. His son familiarly observed to me, "It would have done you good to hear him laugh." Sir Charles Hanbury Williams says of him that he "*laugh'd the heart's laugh.*" Nicholas Hardinge elegantly noticed its peculiarity, "*proprioque vincit seria risu.*"

His conversation was sprightly, animated and facetious; yet occasionally coarse and vulgar, and too often licentious to an unpardonable degree.

In company with women he assumed an air of gallantry, which even in his younger days was ill-suited to his manner and character, but in his latter years was totally incompatible with his age and figure. He affected in his conversation with the sex a trifling levity; but his gaiety was rough and boisterous, and his wit too often coarse and licentious.

If we may believe lord Chesterfield, who knew him well, but whose pen was dipped in gall when he drew his character, "His prevailing weakness was, to be thought to have a polite and happy turn to gallantry, of which he had undoubtedly less than any man living. It was

his favourite and frequent subject of conversation; which proved to those who had any penetration, that it was his prevailing weakness, and they applied to it with success."* Pulteney also said of him, "A writer who would tell him of his success in his amours, would gain his confidence in a higher degree than one who commended the conduct of his administration."† To this foible also a poetaster, after speaking of him under the name of Sir Robert Brass, alludes,—

"Nay, to divert the sneering town,
"Is next a general lover grown,
"Affects to talk of his amours,
"And boasts of having ruined scores,
"While all who hear him bite the lip,
"And scarce with pain their laughter keep."‡

This foible he shared in common with many able men, and particularly with cardinal Richelieu, who piqued himself more on being a man of gallantry than on being a great minister. It is some consolation for persons of inferior abilities, that men of superior talents are not exempt from the infirmities of human nature; and it is no uncommon circumstance, to prefer flattery on those points in which we wish to excel, to just praise for those in which we are known to excel.

He is justly blamed for a want of political decorum, and for deriding public spirit, to which Pope alludes,—

* Lord Chesterfield's Letters to his Son, l. 97.
† A proper reply to a late scurrilous Libel, p. 8.
‡ Sir Robert Brass. A Poem.

" Would he oblige me! let me only find,
" He does not think me, what he thinks mankind."

Although it is not possible to justify him, yet this part of his conduct has been greatly exaggerated. The political axiom generally attributed to him, that *all men have their price*, and which has been so often repeated in verse and prose, was perverted by leaving out the word *those*. Flowery oratory he despised. He ascribed to the interested views of themselves or their relatives, the declarations of pretended patriots, of whom he said, " *All* THOSE *men have their price*," and in the event, many of them justified his observation.* No man was more ready to honour and do justice to sincerity and consistency. He always mentioned his friend the duke of Devonshire in terms of the highest affection and respect, and even applauded the uniform conduct of one of his constant opponents. " I will not say," he observed, " who is corrupt, but I will say who is *not*, and that is Shippen."

His own conduct sufficiently belied the axiom erroneously imputed to him. He was consistent and uniform, never deviating in one single instance from his attachment to the protestant succession. He was neither awed by menaces, nor swayed by corruption; he held one line of conduct with unabating perseverance, and terminated his political career with the same sentiments of loyalty which distinguished his outset.

* From lord Orford and the late lord John Cavendish.

He was naturally liberal, and even prodigal. His buildings at Houghton were more magnificent than suited his circumstances, and drew on him great obloquy. He felt the impropriety of this expenditure, and on seeing his brother's house at Wolterton, expressed his wishes that he had contented himself with a similar structure.* The following anecdote also shows that he regretted his profusion. Sitting by Sir John Hynde Cotton, during the reign of queen Anne, and in allusion to a sumptuous house which was then building by Harley; he observed that to construct a great house was a high act of imprudence in any minister. Afterwards, when he had pulled down the family mansion at Houghton, and raised a magnificent edifice, being reminded of that observation by Sir John Hynde Cotton, he readily acknowledged its justness and truth, but added, "Your recollection is too late, I wish you had reminded me of it before I began building, it might then have been of service to me."†

His style of living was consonant to the magnificence of his mansion. He had usually two annual meetings at Houghton. The one in the spring, to which were invited only the most select friends, and the leading members of the cabinet, continued about three weeks. The second was in autumn, towards the commencement of the shooting season. It continued six weeks or two months, and was called the congress. At this time Houghton was filled with

* From lord Walpole. † From the late Sir John Hynde Cotton.

company from all parts. He kept a public table, to which all gentlemen in the county found a ready admission.

The expenses of these meetings have been computed at £.3,000 a year. Nothing could be more ill-judged than the enormous profusion, except the company for which it was made. The mixed multitude consisted of his friends in both houses, and of their friends. The noise and uproar, the waste and confusion were prodigious. The best friends of Sir Robert Walpole in vain remonstrated against this scene of riot and misrule. As the minister himself was fond of mirth and jollity, the conviviality of their meetings was too frequently carried to excess; and lord Townshend, whose dignity of deportment and decorum of character revolted against these scenes, which he called the Bacchanalian orgies of Houghton, not unfrequently quitted Rainham during their continuance. But notwithstanding these censures, and the impropriety of such conduct, it undoubtedly gained and preserved to the minister numerous adherents, who applauded a mode of living so analogous to the spirit of ancient hospitality.

This profusion would have been highly disgraceful, had it been attended with a rapacious disposition. On the contrary, he gave many instances of carelessness and disregard of his private fortune. He expended £.14,000 in building a new lodge in Richmond park,* and when the king, on the death of Bothmar, in

* From lord Orford.

1738, offered him the house in Downing-street, he refused it as his own property, but accepted it as an appendage to the office of chancellor of the exchequer.*

He was, from his early youth, fond of the diversions of the field, and retained this taste till prevented by the infirmities of age. He was accustomed to hunt in Richmond park with a pack of beagles. On receiving a packet of letters he usually opened that from his gamekeeper first; and he was fond of sitting for his picture in his sporting dress. He was like chancellor Oxenstiern, a sound sleeper, and used to say, "that he put off his cares with his clothes."

His social qualities were generally acknowledged. He was animated and lively in conversation, and in the moment of festivity realised the fine eulogium which Pope has given of him,—

"Seen him, I have, but, in his happier hour
"Of social pleasure, ill-exchang'd for power;
"Seen him uncumber'd with the venal tribe,
"Smile without art, and win without a bribe."
Epilogue to the Satires.

To the virtues of Sir Robert Walpole I feel regret in not being able to add that he was the patron of letters and the friend of science. But he unquestionably does not deserve that honourable appellation, and in this instance his rank in the Temple of Fame is far inferior to that of Halifax, Oxford, and Bolingbroke. It is a matter

* From lord Walpole

of wonder that a minister who had received a learned education, and was no indifferent scholar, should have paid so little attention to the muses; nor can it be denied, that this neglect of men of letters, was highly disadvantageous to his administration, and exposed him to great obloquy. The persons employed in justifying his measures, were by no means equal to the task of combating Pulteney, Bolingbroke, and Chesterfield, those Goliahs of Opposition; and the political pamphlets written in his defence, are far inferior in humour, argument, and style, to the publications of his adversaries.

Pope has ably satirised the herd of political writers employed by the minister, in the Dunciad,—

> "Next plung'd a feeble, but a desp'rate pack,
> "With each a sickly brother at his back:
> "Sons of a day! just buoyant on the flood,
> "Then number'd with the puppies in the mud,
> "Ask ye their names? I could as soon disclose,
> "The names of these blind puppies as of those.
> "Fast by, like Niobe (her children gone),
> "Sits mother Osborne, stupify'd to stone!
> "And monumental brass this record bears,
> "These are,—ah, no, these were the gazetteers!"

But that he did not wholly neglect literary merit, appears from the grateful strains of the author of the Night Thoughts, for whom he procured a pension from George the First, which was increased at his suggestion by George the Second, to £.200 a year, at that time no inconsiderable reward.

At this the muse shall kindle, and aspire:
My breast, O Walpole, glows with grateful fire,
The streams of royal bounty turn'd by thee,
Refresh the dry remains of poesy.
My fortune shows, when arts are Walpole's care,
What slender worth forbids us to despair:
Be this thy partial smile from censure free;
'Twas meant for merit, though it fell on me.*

The truth is, Sir Robert Walpole neither delighted in letters, nor considered poets as men of business. He was accustomed to say, that they were fitter for speculation than for action, that they trusted to theory, rather than to experience, and were guided by principles inadmissible in practical life. His opinion was confirmed by the experience of his own time. Prior made but an indifferent negotiator; his friend Steele was wholly incapable of application, and Addison a miserable secretary of state. He was so fully impressed with these notions, that when he made Congreve commissioner of the customs, he said, "You will find he has no head for business."

Low persons were employed by government, and profusely paid, some of whom not unfrequently propagated in private conversation, and even in public clubs, disadvantageous reports of the minister, and declared that high rewards induced them to write against their real sentiments. Several known disseminators of infidelity were engaged to defend his measures. Many warm remonstrances were frequently made by the minister's friends against employing

* Young's Instalment, addressed to Sir Robert Walpole.

such base mercenaries, but usually disregarded. Some of these insignificant writers had frequent access to him. Their delusive and encouraging accounts of persons and things, were too often more credited, than the sincere and free intimations of those who were more capable of giving accurate information. But this seems an error too common in ministers: they prefer favourable accounts to dismal truth, and readily believe what they wish to be true.

It is a natural curiosity to inquire into the behaviour and occupations of a minister retired from business and divested of power. Those who admired his talents, while he swayed senates and governed kingdoms, contemplate him, "in their mind's eye," enjoying his retreat with dignity, and passing his leisure hours with calmness and complacency. Yet nothing in general is more unsatisfactory than such an inquiry, or more illusive than such a preconceived opinion. The well-known saying, that "no man is a hero to his valet de chambre," may be applied with strict justice to this case. Sir Robert Walpole experienced the truth of the observation, that a fallen minister is like a professed beauty, who has lost her charms, and to whom the recollection of past conquests, but poorly compensates for present neglect.

Though he had not forgotten his classical attainments, he had little taste for literary occupations. He once expressed his regret on this subject to a friend, who was reading in the library at Houghton. "I wish," he said, "I took as much delight in reading as you do; it

would be the means of alleviating many tedious hours in my present retirement; but to my misfortune I derive no pleasure from such pursuits."—On another occasion, he said to his son Horace, who, with a view to amuse him, was preparing to read some historical performance, "O! do not read history, for that I know must be false."*

His principal amusement consisted in planting, observing the growth of his former plantations, and in seeing his son Horace arrange the fine collection of pictures at Houghton. He had a good taste for painting, and his observations on the style of the respective masters were usually judicious.

A letter which he wrote from Houghton to general Churchill, in 1743, was much admired, as indicating a love of retirement, and contempt of past grandeur. Yet this letter strikes me in a contrary light; it proves that he was weary of that repose which he affected to praise; and that he did not, as much as he professed, taste the charms of the inanimate world. The trite observation, that the beeches do not deceive, proves either that he regretted times past, or that with all his penetration, he had not when in power, made a just estimate of the deceit and treachery of dependents and courtiers.† Hough-

* From Lord Orford.

† Earl of Orford to general Churchill,—

Dear Charles; Houghton, June 24, 1743.

This place affords no news, nor subject of entertainment, or amusement; for fine men of wit and pleasure about town, under

ton had been either the temporary place of retreat from public business, or the scene of friendly intercourse and convivial jollity, and neglect rendered it comparatively a solitude. He saw and felt this desertion with greater sensibility than became his good sense; but in the calm of total retirement, such disagreeable reflections occur often and sink deep. The season of natural gaiety was irrecoverably past; he laboured under a painful distemper; the ill-

stand not the language, and taste not the pleasure of the inanimate world. My flatterers here are all mutes. The oaks, the beeches, the chesnuts, seem to contend which best shall please the lord of the manor. They cannot deceive, they will not lie. I in sincerity admire them, and have as many beauties about me as fill up all my hours of dangling, and no disgrace attends me from 67 years of age. Within doors we come a little nearer to real life, and admire, upon the almost speaking canvass, all the airs and graces which the proudest ladies can boast. With these I am satisfied, as they gratify me with all I wish, and all I want, and expect nothing in return, which I cannot give.

If these, dear Charles, are any temptations, I heartily invite you to come and partake of them. Shifting the scene has sometimes its recommendation, and from country fare, you may possibly return with a better appetite to the more delicate entertainments of a court life.

Since I wrote the above, we have been surprised with the good news* from abroad. Too much cannot be said of it. It is truly matter of infinite joy, because of infinite consequence.

I am, dear Charles,
Yours, most affectionately, Orford.

This letter is here printed from a copy kindly communicated by lord Calthorpe, who found it among his family papers. His lordship's grandfather, Sir Henry Gough, baronet, was neighbour to Sir Robert Walpole, at Chelsea, and was in habits of intimacy with him. It is printed in the Gentleman's Magazine for 1743, with many errors, which are rectified in this copy. An elegant imitation of this letter in Latin verse is given in the Correspondence.

* The battle of Dettingen.

assorted marriage of his eldest son, and the embarrassed situation of his own affairs increased his dejection.

This state of mind was natural. Every circumstance must have appeared uninteresting to a man, who from the twenty-third year of his age, had been uniformly engaged in scenes of political exertion; who, from the commencement of his parliamentary career, had passed a life of unremitting activity, and made a conspicuous figure in the senate, and in the cabinet.

To him who had directed the helm of Government in England, and whose decisions affected the interests of Europe in general, all speculative opinions must have appeared dull; to him who had drawn all his knowledge from experience, all theory must have appeared trifling or erroneous. He who had fathomed the secrets of all the European cabinets, must have considered history as a tissue of fables, and have smiled at the folly of those writers, who affect to penetrate into state affairs, and trace all the motives of action. He who had long been the dispenser of honours and wealth must have perceived a wide difference between the cold expressions of duty and friendship, and the warm effusions of that homage, which self-interest and hope inspire in those who court or expect favours. He must have been divested of human passions, had he not experienced some mortification in finding, that he was indebted to his situation for much of that obsequious regard which he fondly thought was paid to his personal qualities.

‡

I shall conclude this sketch of his private character, with a portrait, drawn from the life, by his friend Sir Charles Hanbury Williams, in an epistle to Henry Fox; though it contains more truth than poetry.

But ORFORD's self I've seen, whilst I have read,
Laugh the heart's laugh, and nod the approving head.
Pardon, great shade, if duteous on thy hearse,
I hang my grateful tributary verse;
If I who followed through thy various day,
Thy glorious zenith, and thy bright decay;
Now strew thy tomb with flowers, and o'er thy urn,
With England, Liberty, and Envy, mourn.
His soul was great, and dar'd not but do well.
His noble pride still urg'd him to excel.
Above the thirst of gold—if in his heart
Ambition govern'd, av'rice had no part.
A genius to explore untrodden ways,
Where prudence sees no track, nor ever strays,
Which books and schools in vain attempt to teach,
And which laborious art can never reach.
Falsehood and flattery, and the tricks of court,
He left to statesmen of a meaner sort:
Their cloaks and smiles were offer'd him in vain;
His acts were justice which he dar'd maintain,
His words were truth that held them in disdain.
Open to friends, but e'en to foes sincere,
Alike remote from jealousy and fear;
Tho' Envy's howl, tho' Faction's hiss he heard;
Tho' senates frown'd; tho' death itself appeared;
Calmly he viewed them; conscious that his ends
Were right, and truth and innocence his friends.
Thus was he form'd to govern and to please;
Familiar greatness, dignity with ease,
Compos'd his frame; admir'd in ev'ry state,
In private amiable, in public great;
Gentle in power, but daring in disgrace;
His love was liberty, his wish was peace.

Such was the man that smil'd upon my lays;
And what can heighten thought, or genius raise,
Like praise from him whom all mankind must praise?
Whose knowledge, courage, temper, all surpris'd,
Whom many lov'd, few hated, none despis'd.

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX TO VOL. IV.

CONTAINING

SELECT PARTS

OF THE

CORRESPONDENCE

ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED IN THE FIRST EDITION.

ORIGINAL CORRESPONDENCE.

1737—1745.

SIR ROBERT WALPOLE TO HORACE WALPOLE.

[Walpole Papers.]

General state of affairs in regard to Spain and France—Urges him to continue at the Hague.

London, August 3—14, 1739.

MY DEAR BROTHER;

YOU could not expect, whilst I was in the country, that I should have any thing worth troubling you with; nor had I any opportunity of reading your dispatches until I came to town; and, upon the perusal of them, I have nothing to offer, but to lament the melancholy situation of the country where you are, which may immediately affect their best friends, and must finally involve them in all the consequences which may arise from the impotent or indolent spirit which governs all the councils there. You will learn, by the accounts that are sent you from the office, how matters stand with us in Spain and France, where they are both fully apprized, by what has happened, that our fleets are under hostile orders with regard to Spain. Mr. Haddock's stopping and searching the French ship going into Cales, and taking his letters from him (without committing the least violence of any other kind), which has been complained of by the cardinal to lord Walde-

grave, proves his orders are, to stop and seize every Spanish vessel going into or coming out of Cales. Ogle's cruising with four large ships upon the coasts of Spain, and Vernon's being ordered to continue for some time in those seas with nine men of war, plainly denote the uses and services which these squadrons are designed for; and as the Azogues and Buenos-Ayres ships are daily expected home, it cannot miss observation, that they may probably fall in with some of our squadrons, whether they are ordered into Cales or the Bay of Biscay; of this they are so sensible in Spain, that Mr. Keene, in his last letter, says, they are under the greatest apprehension for the Azogues in Spain; and the Spanish merchants here in London have offered 30 *per cent.* for insurance, which they can no ways procure; and this is a certain fact.

The cardinal has, in one of his usual conversations to lord Waldegrave, mentioned the Azogues as an affair he hopes we will not think of, but not as a matter of form, but purely confidential to lord Waldegrave; he declares himself under no engagement with Spain, but strongly insinuates what we may apprehend if we attack Spain. The letters that came from France this week, go further in that style than ever; and I think it ripens apace.

Cambis is expected here very suddenly, and I think his orders will open the whole scene; for I imagine he will have orders to insist that we shall neither take the Azogues nor flota, or galeons coming home, nor stop the flota that is now preparing to go out, which France, as the cardinal has already said, has so great a share in, that they cannot suffer the wealth and treasure of France to be taken, though on board Spanish ships. In short, we live here in daily expectation to hear that the Azogues are either got in or taken; and it seems as if the latter was not thought the least probable. By the intelligence from 101 [Bussy,] it is expressly said that Fenelon has orders to propose to the States a joint

mediation with France, between us and Spain. Surely they will not immediately accept the office of mediators, to put themselves out of the capacity of allies.

But, as this grand affair seems now to draw to a sudden crisis, forgive me if I think you should not leave your present station, for some weeks at least, untill it is more certainly seen what we are to expect. To leave an embassy, where you have been so long employ'd, a little abruptly, at this critical hour, may not be thought so right; and it may so happen, that you yourself wou'd wish to be in Holland again, at the time of the final decision of what part the Dutch will act. I do not mean to carry this any further than to the end of this summer, by which time it will be seen what must be expected. This way of reasoning has prevented my saying any thing to the king about Mr. Trevor, for I cannot think you will repent spending August and September where you are. The parliament will certainly meet this year in November, before which time I shou'd be very sorry not to have you here. When the time comes, I will certainly do my utmost to do Mr. Trevor the best service I can.

[Walpole Papers.]

[This letter is endorsed, in sir Robert Walpole's hand, "Paper from Spain by Mr. K.—It contains a *good justification of Spain.*" It was probably written to Mr. Keene by one of the Spanish ministers, and sent by him to sir Robert Walpole.]

SIR;

THE experience of the evils caused by the war, teaches us to know and desire the advantages of peace. But it is a school where our lessons are dear bought and cruel. And the bare name of *peace* has something

in it so sweet and agreeable to human nature, that it is to be sought for and coveted without feeling the miseries of so calamitous an instruction. War being (according to the opinion of all prudent persons) a work of necessity, and not merely of our will, I have never been able to comprehend, to this day, what necessity could drive your brave nation to declare war, which all impartial people have thought to be far from a necessary one.

The complaints of both nations were reciprocal. Each of them accused the other of insults. And if the Spaniards had the liberty of making speeches in the presence of their sovereign, they would not want eloquence to prove the justice of their cause: Your merchants, by studied declamations and artful discourses, represent the excesses of our guarda costas to be much greater than they are: but they conceal, dissemble, or diminish the abuses they are guilty of in our commerce. They bawl out against the unjust depredations of the Spaniards: *they feign, I know not what slaveries and cruelties committed upon their sailors, without expressing any circumstances of time, place, and occasion, which are generally lookt upon as necessary means to procure relief and credit to any assertions whatsoever.*

I cannot doubt, from your ingenuous temper, that if we could as freely communicate our thoughts to one another as we have formerly done, you must allow, that what vexes your merchants most is, that the Spaniards will not let them have their full liberty to carry on a contraband trade, by which they gain such immense riches. The unruly passion they have for these unjust gains, makes them despise the other advantages, tho' very great ones, which the friendship of the Spanish nation has all along granted to them. Were it not notorious to the world, what is meant by the cry of FREE NAVIGATION, one might believe that the Spaniards were publick violators of the law of nations. In such a manner do your dextrous popular

orators in parliament exagerate these matters. But neither they themselves, nor their auditors, in the warmth of their attempts to get from us all they desire, can possibly be ignorant of such points, in our favour, as they think proper to bury in silence.

But, let that be as it will, when the sovereigns of both crowns were treating with zeal and good faith, in order to adjust the respective differences between their subjects, according to reason and equity, to make satisfaction for their losses; to quell their complaints; to establish their ancient treaties; and to prevent disorders for the future; what necessity was there to abandon an amicable convention, already signed and ratifyed, to substitute in its place the declaration of a cruel war? How much less destructive and expensive would the preserving the peace have been to your nation? How much more profitable would our friendship have been to you, always of great advantage to your trade, even allowing the vexations you pretend to receive from the Spaniards to have some foundation of truth?

The war we are at present engaged in, according to my poor opinion, is the most proper means imaginable to weaken and distress both the contending parties; whilst the other powers that look on gather the fruit of our dissentions. But I cannot comprehend how your nation, by the method she proposes, can effectually secure the advantages in her trade that she aspires at, and to do herself that justice which she says Spain has refused her. Various are the successes of war, and no one knows the party that the elements themselves may take. Their rage must have the worst effect upon those who are most exposed to their power. The princes, our neighbours, keep themselves in a profitable state of indifference, because our mutual destruction is their interest: but if they see that fortune favours your arms, they will become jealous of you, and be more active in taking proper precautions against your success, than

in pitying and preventing our disgraces. They will then turn their thoughts how to quash your pride and oppress your power; and if they shall not be able to reap the fruits of your victories for themselves, they will, at least, endeavour to hinder you from enjoying them.

Spain is not destitute of means to procure friends and allyes; and its inhabitants are so nice of their honour, that they will prodigally, and without the least reserve, contribute their treasures, and even their estates, to revenge themselves, and chastise your haughtiness. Ruinous as this may prove to them, they will think all well employed to see you humbled. England does not want very powerfull rivals and competitors, who will look upon your losses as so much gained to themselves, and as their own losses whatever successes you may have in your present undertakings. Of this sort we shall certainly find some who are well-disposed to enter into operations against you, particularly if we allure them with the same advantages that have encreased your power to the pitch it is.

At least, in this ill-judged war, can you deny that, over and above the loss you must necessarily sustain from the interruption of your commerce with us, and the difficulties and danger you meet with in carrying on that with other powers, you are obliged to expend immense sums of money which you will not repay yourselves. And even when, by the help of these treasures and the success of your arms, you shall have made many rich prizes and great conquests, you must, at last, make restitution of them; because the other powers will oblige you to it: and you must grant it, either out of love or necessity of a peace, without which your trade itself will turn to your disadvantage; and you had better abandon it than pay so dear for preserving it.

Your houses of parliament, that make such loud complaints against the Spaniards, and impute several crimes to them that never can be proved, why

do they forget the just pretensions of Spain, and the promises of his Britannick majesty? Does the usurpation of Gibraltar and Port Mahon, continued for so many years, give less motives of complaint than the pretended losses of your merchants? Are the damages they have suffered greater than those caused by that usurpation? There never can be a solid and durable peace between Spain and England as long as Gibraltar and Port Mahon are under the British dominion; nor can *La Florida* be in any safety as long as the new colony of Georgia is allowed to subsist. Another obstacle to peace is, the Assiento treaty, and the annual ship, which is of so universal prejudice to our commerce. But if Gibraltar and Port Mahon were once restored to Spain; the new colony demolished; the Assiento treaty annulled; and the huts, built near the Bay of Campeachy, taken away; then, and then only, can the important and salutary end of a sincere and lasting peace be procured between the two powers. But as it is just that the benefits and advantages of peace should be reciprocal on both sides, Spain might yield to England a free navigation to and from its colonies, under some proper precautions, to prevent an illicit commerce in the Spanish West Indies. Spain likewise might consent, in acknowledgement of the restitution of the above-mentioned places; the demolition of the colony of Georgia; and the annulling the Assiento treaty, to a proportionate equivalent in money, to be paid on the effects of the flotas and galleons, on their arrival in Spain, considered for the term of —— years, at the rate of — *per cent.*, on all sorts of effects they bring. Spain likewise might yield up to England the right that the Guipuscuans, Biscayners, and other subjects of his catholick majesty have to the cod-fishing at Newfoundland; and, after all, re-establish again the convention at the Pardo; and shew all possible condescensions to the demands of the English;

making, for this end, a clear and specifick treaty of peace, and another treaty of commerce.

If your prince, in virtue of his royal word, and in attention to our notorious justice, would think seriously upon the restitution of those places, and on the rest of the foregoing articles, I am certain that he would find the Spanish ministry in the best disposition imaginable to treat and conclude an accommodation so much to the advantage of your trade, that you should want nothing that you could reasonably ask for. And, for procuring this great and good end, there is no occasion for mediators and guarantees; the good faith and mutual equity of the parties concerned would be sufficient of themselves. I thought proper to insinuate this my idea to you, as conducive to the tranquillity of mankind, and agreeable to the prosperity of two nations, who suffer as much by their dissention, as they gain by a mutuall good understanding. Peace would soon repair our losses, and turn the expectations of our rivals into scoff and ridicule.

SIR ROBERT WALPOLE TO HORACE WALPOLE.

[Walpole Papers.]

Cannot prevail on the king to appoint Mr. Trevor plenipotentiary—Embarrassments on that occasion—Arrival of the Azogues.

MY DEAR BROTHER; Chelsea, August 21, 1739.

I SCARCE know what to add upon the subject of Mr. Trevor; for I am very sure all that can be said to the king, at present, will signify nothing; for I have truly said and represented every thing that has been suggested to me, or cou'd occur to me, in the best

and strongest manner I am able; but all to no purpose. But I find, by a long conversation this day with Mr. Trevor, and the great pains he took to convince me of the reasonableness of his demand, that he supposes there is something still wanting, on my part, that might make this matter succeed; which, I give my word, is in no degree the case. This brings it to a short point, for Mr. Trevor to determine what he will do; and upon this I have told him my opinion but too plainly: but now I think you become a little concerned in the immediate decision of this question; for I am afraid every body will be of opinion it is impossible for you to leave the Hague before somebody or other is there to relieve you; at this juncture, it can be nobody but Mr. Trevor that can do the business. But this consideration will, just now, have no other effect upon the king, but to make him very angry with Mr. Trevor, and order us to think immediately upon somebody else; and the result of the whole will finally, with the king, fall upon you: which I think Mr. Trevor should not bring upon you. Dear Horace, consider it well; for if Mr. Trevor is resolv'd to make his stay never so short, it seems to me he has no option, just now, but to comply with the king's terms, and leave his future fate to a more favourable season. And until this point is settled, any orders about the yacht will too much disturb us at Kensington, and may occasion something disagreeable.

We had before heard of the refusal of the trinkets in Denmark, by a manner you know of, but represented in a very different light, as if rejected with some scorn and resentment. Mr. Titley will do well to return them by some favourable opportunity, but lord Baltimore seems a very improper hand, and will afford matter of much ridicule, if explained in St. James's square.

You will have heard of the arrival of the Azogues at St. Andero; there is reason to believe that there are two ships still at sea, with a pink from Buenoes Ayres,

and a very rich ship from Vera Cruz; notice is sent to our cruisers of this intelligence, but we have heard nothing from any of them since they were upon their stations. Lord Harrington will send you an account of a very sad transaction of the king of Sweden. What is to be done? Is the king of Prussia to be spoke to? If it is adviseable, who can be sent, or who would care to go?

SIR ROBERT WALPOLE TO HORACE WALPOLE.

[Walpole Papers.]

King refuses to appoint Mr. Trevor plenipotentiary.

DEAR BROTHER; London, August 28, 1739.

I HAVE forgot whether I acquainted you before, that I had endeavoured to prevail with the king to make Mr. Trevor envoy and plenipotentiary upon your return, and that his majesty had refused the latter in a pretty peremptory way. However, at your instance, I yesterday renewed the attack, and in the strongest and best manner I was able, laboured to convince the king of the reasonableness and necessity of its being done; but was so far from succeeding that he rejected it in a manner not to be express'd. I told him, Mr. Trevor had declared he cou'd not possibly go without it; but that availed nothing: so that you must lay aside all thoughts of the plenipo, and upon that foot Mr. Trevor must determine for himself.

I this day hinted to Mr. Trevor my thoughts that he had better consider of it; and if he might be appointed envoy, which is agreed to, he should take the advice of his friends, whether it was not better to conform at present to the king's sentiments, upon hopes of a more

favourable opportunity, than to throw himself at once out of all business, which he might live to repent. But I am afraid my advice had no other effect upon him than to make him suspect my friendship. He talks of waiting for some provision at home, not dreaming of the number of competitors for every thing that he will think worthy of him. I have no more to say, but that I have most sincerely done my utmost to serve him, and he must now determine for himself.

I send you a letter I received from the lord chancellor, the latter part only relates to you; it was occasion'd by a discourse of your coming home. You will see his sense, and it is indeed the sense of every body here. I know your wishes and desires, and will endeavour to gratify them; but for some short time, I think, you must have patience. We think and talk of nothing but the Azogues: a few days must clear that point, and then we must look forward.

1743.

THE EARL OF ORFORD TO ARCHIBALD DUKE OF ARGYLE.

[Campbell Papers.]

Condoles with him on the death of John duke of Argyle, and congratulates him on his accession to the title and estate.

MY LORD; Houghton, October 8, 1743.

I CONDOLE with you for the losse of a brother; and, having discharged that debt of ceremony, give me leave to congratulate your grace upon every accession of honour, influence, and interest that descends to you from this change of fortune, which can never be greater

than I most sincerely wish, and you deserve. Honour and titles are but your birth-right; and as they carry along with them hereditary influence, that will not bring a greater increase of esteem and regard, than it will receive from your naturall and personal merit: may they be attended with such an addition of fortune, as may place the duke of Argyle in the full lustre of his antient family! But I will putt an end to compliments, least a letter in this style should savour more of form than of cordiality and sincerity. You do not love compliments, and I am no professor of ceremony. Lett it suffice that I truly am, &c.

THE EARL OF CHOLMONDELEY TO THE EARL OF ORFORD.

[Walpole Papers.]

The king desires his presence in London before the meeting of parliament.

MY LORD; November 5, 1744.

I HAD this morning the honour of attending his majesty in his closet, being called for by the lord of the bed-chamber, by his majesty's command; when he was pleased, after many gracious expressions in your favour, and speaking of your service, the last year in particular, in relation to the question of the continuance of the Hanover troops, in the strongest terms, to command me to inform you, that it would be highly agreeable to him your coming to town a week or ten days before the meeting of parliament. He further added, that the experience he had for so many years received of your lordship's zeal for his service, your consummate judgment in the interior and domestic

¶

affairs of this kingdom, were so many motives to desire your attendance when England was under the necessity of taking upon herself so large a share in the conduct and support of the common cause, in the present dangerous and disturbed situation of Europe; knowing of what real weight your opinion and influence must be with numbers in both houses of parliament, when such nice and important points must come before them for their deliberation and advice. As I write by express command, I make use of his majesty's very expressions, to the best of my recollection, and shall, therefore, not presume to add any thing of my own, but only to assure you that I am, &c.

I send this express, being directed so to do by his majesty.

THE EARL OF ORFORD TO THE EARL OF CHOLMONDELEY.

[Walpole Papers.]

Will obey the king's commands—Laments the difficult situation of affairs.

MY LORD; November 7, 1744.

I AM infinitely obliged to his majesty for the goodness he was pleased to expresse for me by you. He does me but justice in believing that the care and study of my life, whilst I had the honour to serve his majesty, was to deserve his favour and good opinion; and I shall still persevere, in a private capacity, to endeavour to meritt the continuance of his grace and goodness, the only reward I have now to ask for all my past and future services.

I will sett out for London with all the expedition I

can; and am heartily sorry to see his majesty's affairs reduced to such extremities. It has been a long time easy to foresee the unavoidable and almost unsurmountable difficulties that would attend the present system of politics. I wish to God it was as easy to show the way out of them. But be assured, that I will, in every thing, to the utmost of my power, consult and contribute to the honour, interest, and safety of the king and kingdom.

I have often been out of order this summer with making bloody urine, which has frequently returned upon me from the motion in a coach. I am at present perfectly free from it, and hope, by lying still and quiet a week longer, I shall be able to undertake a London journey, and, by care and management, to perform it, so as to gett to town several days before the meeting of parliament will be finally adjusted and settled at court; till that is done, I can be of no use or service in recommending the measures to such as may have a regard for my opinion.

THE EARL OF CHOLMONDELEY TO THE EARL OF ORFORD.

The king earnestly wishes that he would hasten his journey to London.

MY lord, I had the favour of your lordship's letter, and communicated the contents of it immediately; and am directed to tell you, that nothing could be more acceptable than the assurances you give, and that they were received with great cordiality. The desire of seeing your lordship in town grows every day stronger; and I am to enforce your doing it, without inconvenience to yourself, as early as may be. The warmest

and strongest expressions were made use of in speaking of your lordship's behaviour. I venture this by the post, as I imagine it will still find you at Houghton. The moment you arrive I will, in person, assure you of the real respect, &c.

HORACE WALPOLE TO THE EARL OF ORFORD.

[Walpole Papers.]

Explains the motives of Carteret's, Newcastle's, and Pelham's conduct—Approves his answer to the king's message.

Woolterton, November 8th, 1744.

MY DEAR LORD;

THE circumstances and contents of the letter you received from lord Cholmondeley by express, evidently show that it was first concerted by the influence of Carteret with the king, then settled and dispatched between his lordship and lord Cholmondeley alone, all entirely without the privity and knowledge of the P—ms; that there has been a contest in the closet about the conduct of the approaching session; and that Carteret's opinion, for supporting with vigour the present war prevayls. I was convinced, by some observations on Mr. Pelham's behaviour, before I left the town, that either want of resolution or capacity in his great and difficult station, or both, inclined him to wish an end to the present troubles abroad at any rate. His intimation by Mr. Selwin to you, to stay in the country, and the language the speaker is sayd to hold lately, (who is in Pelham's confidence,) that we should wrap ourselves up within ourselves, has strengthened that opinion; and the inclosed letter of the 3d instant,

from the duke of Newcastle, in answer to one I had wrote to him about the Sicilian abbot, induces me to believe, that his hatred to Carteret has even made his grace fall from his glorious notions, of making a figure abroad, into his brother's way of thinking.

Your lordship will observe how coolly and doubtfully he speaks of the two only points that seem favourable to the allys abroad; and how remarkable his conclusion is about the backwardness of the Dutch, and our inability to do without them; so that upon our arrival in town, we shall meet, among that set, the same doctrine about the war as we did last year about the Hanover troops. Your lordship's answer to lord Cholmondeley (for the sight of which I return you my thanks) is, in my opinion, as proper and prudent, considering your situation, as could be. But the wipe you give to *the present system of politics*, and your avoyding to enter into any previous consultation of measures, will make Carteret perceive that you decline having any thing to doe with him. However, your strong expressions of zeal and attachment to his majesty and his service, must obviate any ill impression he may endeavour to make upon the king to your prejudice.

It is not impossible that the baron's * advantageous report of you may have had a great effect upon his majesty; and that Carteret perceiving it, may have taken this turn, either to engage you in his measures, or to make an ill use of your coldness, where your assistance is sought for by his majesty himselfe. But lett that be as it will, I think it impossible for you to return any other answer than you have done. I think Mr. P——m can't avoyd writing circular letters to the members; but I much doubt whether you will hear from him on account of his sentiments relating to measures; because he will not encourage Carteret's notions; and

* Baron Hartenberg, who had lately made the tour of Norfolk, and was extreamly pleased with lord Orford, whom he had never seen before.

he will scarce venture to write against what he knows to be his majesty's inclinations.

We sett out for London next Saturday sevennight; so that we shall not interfere with you upon the road.

Perhaps you will hear something from your son Horace: if any thing material comes, I should be glad to know it.

HORACE WALPOLE TO THE EARL OF ORFORD.

[Walpole Papers.]

Resignation of lord Granville—Changes in the administration—Recommends him to defer his journey to London.

Wolterton, November 7, 1744.

MY DEAR LORD;

FINDING, by your lordship's letter, that you had received nothing from any body else, but your son Horace, relating to the present crisis at court, I have thought proper to send you the inclosed anonymous letter which I received by the last post, wrote, I suppose, the same day with your son's, because it is plain that it wholly concerns yourselfe: the hand is so well counterfeited, that it is impossible to guess the author by that; but the sense and substance of it shews plainly that it is from some friend that is well-informed; and I imagine it may be from John Selwyn. The inclosed, that came at the same time from Popple, who I conclude must have had his intelligence from Cleveland Court, by his intimacy there, in some measure strengthens that opinion. Whether you think the hint of such weight and authority as to make you put off your journey to London for some time longer, you are the best judge; if you should, your weakness of bloody

urine may be an excuse; and in that case, a letter wrote by this day's post to me, addressed to the Cock-pit, will be in town on Monday, and will, upon my arrival there, enable me to say what you shall think proper, for your not coming to town, or to execute any other commands.

I must own that this unexpected revolution at court, without any previous notice to you, gives a new turn and interpretation to lord Cholmondeley's express; and inclines me to think, that it concerns men more than measures, tho' the last are in consequence included in it. And as this grand affair (pursuant to what Mr. Pelham hinted to you in his letter by Morris, that *the dance would no farther goe)* has been some time in agitation, I am really surprized that lord Cholmondeley was not so kind as to inform you by a private letter, when he sent the express, how matters stood at court; for it is very possible, unless you hear this day of the disposition of places, and a compleat and determined scheme of the new ministry, the king's, or rather lord Granville's, resolution for filling up the vacancys may be reserved for your arrival; which, as it concerns persons, is extremely hazardous and embarrassing; for I take it for granted, that the meeting of parliament will be put off for some time, or adjourned immediately. As I thought it my duty to send you the anonymous letter, I could not forbear these loose speculations, entirely submitted to your better judgement.

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